F. 14. 55

A Treatise OF REPENTANCE AND OF FASTING, Especially of the LENT-FAST.

In III. Parts.

BIBL. CANT. ACAD.

Pœnitentia est malè perpetrata plangere, & plangenda minimè perpetrare.

LONDON,
Printed for *R. Royston*, Bookseller to His most Sacred Majesty.
MDCLXXXVI.

IMPRIMATUR.

Jo. Battely, R^mo P. D^no Wilhelm. Archiep. Cantuar. à Sacris Domesticis.

Ex Ædib. Lamb.
Oct. 31. 1685.

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1416:90

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

THE Author of this little Treatise, designed it as a Manual, not of Controversie, but regular Piety, and for common Use. He did not, therefore, think fit to add any thing by way of Disputation concerning those Doctrines and Practices in the *Roman* Church, which respect Fasting and other Bodily Austerities.

It had been very eaſie for him to have written a more *Learned* Book; but, all things conſider'd, he could not (it may be) have publiſhed, at this time, any thing more *ſeaſonable*, and generally *uſeful*.

We abound with Books in on other practical Subjects; though, by reaſon of the ſeveral tempers and capacities of Readers, which in the ſame matter, require variety of Form, we cannot complain of a ſuperfluity.

But, upon This Argument, we meet not with great plenty of diſtinct Treatiſes, unleſs we put ſuch into the number as the Writers have tranſcribed, ſome from Fancy, others from

from severity of Nature. For *Epicures* are not more humourous in their Rules of Luxury, than *Monasticks* are in their Rules of Abstinence.

It is happy, therefore, for the People that they have gain'd this *Tract* concerning Fasting, in which the Directions and Perswasives to a Mortified Life are not embased, either with Capricious Affectation, or Superstitious Rigour. We have need of such Directions, and of a strict and temperate Practice suitable to them.

I intend not, by saying this, to accuse all the *Christians of the Church of England* as Libertines; but to quicken those who live in a remisness, which is not answerable to her Constitution.

ſtitution. I know many in our Communion who lead lives exceeding Regular, and who Exerciſe themſelves in that which is *truly Faſting*. One day at leaſt in every Week they either Abſtain till Night, or uſe a ſmall quantity of ſome ordinary thing, which, in this Northern Air, may keep the Body from being unſerviceable to the Mind. Whereas often amongſt others, their Faſts, if they continue all day, are concluded with a Luxurious Supper, or (which is the common uſe) are but the uſing of another kind of Diet, and then they may Eat a plentiful Dinner: Though this *change of Diet* (eſpecially among the Rich) is no more Faſting, than *change* of *Apparel* is going naked. An Evening Collation alſo,

alſo, is even then allow'd; and to Drink at all times of the day (according to their *Caſuiſts*) doth not diſſolve a Faſt. *Fillia-tius*, in particular, ſaith, that drinking Water, or Wine, or Beer, whether before or after Dinner, whether for nouriſhment or not, does not break a mans Faſt*.

* *Tract.* xxvii. *Part* 11. *c.* 2. *Q.* 10.

There is the like miſtake in a Thing near a kin to this, which it may not be amiſs, in this place, to Correct, becauſe ſome good People (I ſee) are apt to fall into it. There is a complaint amongſt us of want of *Cells* and *Cloiſters*, in which the Exerciſes of Mortification might be (as they think) more advantageouſly perform'd. But as we do not enviouſly leſſen the

true Priviledges of other Places, or ſcornfully forbear to wiſh among our ſelves any good which is in others; ſo we really believe it is much better to be without ſuch Religious Houſes, than to have them ſo Conſtituted and Govern'd as they generally are in other Countries, and as they ſometime were amongſt our ſelves, where they have too much ſerved either to feed *Sloth*, or to heat *Melancholy* by myſtical Arts of muſing into Diſtraction; in which things, Humane Nature, as it is in imperfect Man, needs no Aſſiſtances.

Bleſſed be God, we have at this day, in this Judicious and Pious *Church*, very great conveniencies for the promoting of a Holy and *Mortifi'd*, and, if need

need be, a very *retired* Life. The Members of it may be *Recluſes* in both Sences of the word, which ſignifies, *truly*, Perſons at Liberty, and, *abuſively*, Perſons ſhut up. For there is not (that I know of) any City, or ſcarce a great Town, where there are not Religious Guides of good ability, publick Prayers Morning and Evening, frequent Sacraments, pious furniture for the Cloſet, together with good numbers of Perſons devoutly diſpoſed: And eſpecially in and by *London* theſe happy conveniencies are abundantly afforded, and (I thank God) by very many, heartily embraced. Now if any are inclin'd to live more privately, and (the ſtate of the World, and the affairs of their Families, well allowing it) to

Dedicate

Dedicate a great part of their time to Heavenly Contemplation, and to the more immediate worſhip of God; they may ſerve the Holy purpoſes of Devotion, by retired Lodgings in ſuch Cities, and nigh ſuch Churches, generally much better (in my opinion) than by taking a *Habit*, and making a *Vow*, and committing themſelves, as it were, to a *Religious Priſon*.

They may be as Devout, and as Abſtemious as they pleaſe: They may chuſe their *Converſation*, which is not *ſuch* if it be not agreeable. They may go into the World as often as they ſee they can be uſeful to it; And they may ſhut it out when they judge its company to be inconvenient: And as ſoon as their love

love of Solitude is known, and the Looſe and Impertinent find their *Diſcourſe* not reliſh'd, and their *Viſits* not return'd, they will not uncivilly obtrude upon them. All this the Pious amongſt us may do upon *choice*; which is the true Salt of every Sacrifice we offer to God. They may do it without confinement to one Air, and one Place; to a Society, in which generally there is a *Faction* which makes it uneaſie to perſons of quiet Tempers; to the temptation of coveting forbidden Liberty; to Offices which, in their Nature, are Superſtitious, and, by their length and perpetual repetition, tedious and burthenſom.

They may retire without being looſed from the Bonds of their Duty to their Natural Parents,

rents, which, that great pretender to Mortification, the *Abbé de l' Atrappe* * will have to be cancell'd by the new Monaſtick alliance, and, as they call it, the moral Death and Burial of the Religious in a Cloiſter. They may be orderly without confinement to ſuch Rules as are either abſurd, unprofitable, or unfit for their temper, ſtrength, or preſent circumſtance. For example ſake, They need not be ſtinted, in the three hot months, to juſt ſo many draughts without the eſpecial Licence of the *Superior*; They need not be obliged to have all their Sallets dreſſed with

* *Des devoirs de la vie Monaſtique*, Tom. 2. Chap. 16. Queſt. 12, 13, &c. p. 55, &c. Ed. 2. p 57. — *Si les enfans en ſe retirant — ont perdu les parens qu' ils y avoient ſelon la chair; la Religion leur en a rendu d' autres ſelon l' Eſprit*, &c.

with Cheese and Oil; They need not be forbidden to sleep in any Afternoon which comes not betwixt the *Ides* of *May* and *September*; or be enjoyn'd, as soon as they are risen from their Tables, to betake themselves to their Prayers: Which Rules, with many others, where discretion has had a less share in the forming of them than Imagination, we find in a Body of them collected by *Menardus* *. And yet you are not to esteem of such Rules ‖ as Humane Inventions, but as Laws written by the very finger of God, and receiv'd (as they say the *Rule* of *S. Pachomius* was) by the ministery of an Angel. And you

* *Menard. Conc. Reg. p. 713, 715, 815, &c.*

‖ *Des devoirs, &c. Tom. 1. Chap. 2. Q. 3. p. 6.—Comme les loix écrites du doigt de Dieu.*

you are to believe the *Superior* is the *Vicar of Chriſt* *.

* *Ib. p.* 147.

Doubtleſs a mixt Life is the moſt profitable for the ſtate of the World; and *S. Auſtin* himſelf eſteemed it to be ſo; and Monſieur *Godeau* *, though a Biſhop of the *Roman* Church, agrees with him in that opinion. So that the words of *David*, [*Thou haſt broken my Bonds in ſunder*] which (they ſay) determined the thoughts of the Count *de Bouchage* * to a Monaſtick retreat, ſhould (one would think) both by the ſound, and by the Moraſſence of them, have rather releaſed him from the narrow limits of his penſive inclination.

* *La vie de S. A. p.* 560, 561.

* *L' Hiſt. du Card. de Foyeuſe, p.* 19.

Bu

But I forget that I am not to make this Entrance too large; and I ought not any longer to detain the Reader from the Book it ſelf. I will therefore ſay no more, but that I wiſh this Pious Treatiſe may come into many hands before that *Solemn time of Mortification*, which is approaching; and that it may be a means, by promoting true Chriſtian Sobriety, to counterbalance that Senſuality amongſt us, which needs ſuch a real and exemplary reprehenſion.

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Marie waſhing CHRISTS feet.

IOH. 12. 7

Then ſaid Ieſus. let her alone: Againſt the day of my burying hath ſhe kept this.

8 *For the poore alwayes ye haue with you, but me ye haue not alwaves.*

PART I.

CHAP. I.

Of Repentance in General.

THE nature of Repentance may be underſtood, by the uſe of the word *Repent*, the very firſt time we meet with it in the Book of God, vi. *Gen.* 6, 7. where it is ſaid, *It repented the Lord that he had made man on the Earth, and it grieved him at the heart. And the LORD ſaid, I will deſtroy man, whom I have Created, from the face of the Earth, both Man and Beaſt,* &c. *for it repenteth me that I have made them.*

I find no words wherein the affections of penitent minds, are better and more fully expreſſed, than theſe: In which *Moſes*, ſpeaking concerning the Divine Mind and Will, in the Language of men, hath given us a lively deſcription of the temper of our

own hearts, if we truly repent, that we have offended God.

For, *first*, when a man repents of any thing, that thing displeases him very much. Which is the very foundation of all that is here said by *Moses*, concerning Gods repenting that he had made mankind: With whom he was highly displeased, for their most wicked behaviour towards their Almighty Creator, and bountiful Benefactor.

Then follows, in the next place, sadness, grief and sorrow of mind: Which as naturally flows from the displeasure that any thing gives us, as joy doth from complacency and good liking. And proportionable to the dislike we have of any thing, will be our sadness that we medled with it: So that if we greatly dislike any action we have done, *it will grieve us* (as the phrase is in *Moses*) *at the* very *heart*.

Upon which follows a ceasing to do that action; which gives us such displeasure, that it creates us inexpressible grief and sorrow.

Nor is this all, but condemning in himself

himſelf what he hath done, ſuch a penitent wiſhes, and, as far as he hath power, endeavours, to have it undone: And therefore, we may be ſure, would not upon any account do it, if it were to be done again.

In teſtimony whereof, becauſe the thing cannot be undone, he takes care and uſes caution for the time to come, that it be done no more; and thereby labours to deſtroy the whole body of Sin (as God deſtroyed man from the face of the Earth) becauſe he heartily Repents that ever he committed it, and would gladly obliterate, if it were poſſible, even the memory of it.

We ought not to think that we have true *Repentance towards God*, as *S. Paul* calls it, xx. *Acts* 21. unleſs we feel our hearts thus affected.

For it is confeſſed by every one that hath any ſenſe of God, that all things which we do are not alike pleaſing unto Him; but with ſome things he is highly offended: And that if we be not of his mind, but ſo croſs, as to pleaſe our ſelves in thoſe things which are diſpleaſing unto him; we run our

ſelves thereby into a ſtate of oppoſition and enmity to his Majeſty.

Upon which when we reflect, we cannot be well ſatisfied with our ſelves, but much diſpleaſed at what we have done: becauſe we have been ſo bold as to contradict God; and by that means are become guilty before him; and obnoxious to ſuch puniſhments, as he ſhall think fit to inflict upon us.

And if we believe the holy Scriptures, the puniſhments due to this contempt of God, are ſo frightful, that no guilty man can think of them without ſome horror: And not only be touched with a ſenſe of his folly and of his danger; but be very much troubled and afflicted (whether he reſpect God or himſelf) that he hath, as the Scripture ſpeaks, walked contrary to Him; and thereby made himſelf liable to his heavy diſpleaſure.

And therefore condemning what he hath done (which he cannot look upon without ſhame and confuſion of face, as well as with grief and ſorrow) he reſolves to do ſo no more: But to betake himſelf hereafter unto a new

new life; conformable to Gods holy will and pleaſure in all things. In the former of which, that which we call Repentance begins; and in the latter it ends. An unfeigned ſorrow and grief that we have offended God, is the beginning of it: And a ſerious purpoſe of amendment of life compleats it.

All this is agreed by thoſe that write upon this Subject. And therefore my buſineſs is only to ſhow that the firſt part of Repentance, doth not conſiſt merely in that inward Compunction, and grief, and ſhame, and heavineſs of heart, which are the neceſſary effects of a true ſenſe of what a ſinner hath done, and of what he deſerves to ſuffer: But likewiſe in ſuch outward expreſſions of this inward ſenſe, as are ſuitable to the diſmal condition, into which he hath thrown himſelf; and naturally flows from a heart deeply affected with its guilt, and duly afflicted and grieved for it.

CHAP. II.

Of Sorrow for Sin, in Particular.

THAT we ought to be inwardly troubled in our mind, and exceedingly grieved, afflicted and pained at the very heart, to think we have offended ſo good and gracious a Father, as hath called us into the ſtate of Salvation by Chriſt *Jeſus*, and thereby loſt his grace and favour; is a thing, as I have ſaid already, confeſſed, without any the leaſt diſpute about it. And it is as much acknowledged, I hope, that it ought not to end, till it hath wrought in us a ſincere reſolution to do ſo no more. It is ſenſeleſs to think of recovering his favour; unleſs we be thus piouſly diſpoſed.

But I ſhall prove as plainly, that it becomes true Penitents, to make ſuch outward expreſſions of thoſe inward affections, as may not only ſhow to all the world that they are heartily ſorry,

ſorry, and aſhamed of their folly, their falſeneſs, their ingratitude, and all the diſorders they have committed, to the diſhonour of God, and the diſturbance of the peace and good eſtate of the World; but alſo ſatisfie themſelves, that their affliction is more than a tranſient paſſion; and be a ſecurity likewiſe to them, from relapſing into that wickedneſs, which, if they be ſincere Penitents, they reſolve to forſake.

The Soul and the Body are ſo near Neighbours, or rather Friends; that one of them cannot be concerned in any thing, but the other muſt bear its part therein alſo. And therefore as they accompany one another in all other actions; ſo it's fit and juſt and neceſſary, that they ſhould do in Repentance. They have done evil together; and therefore it is but reaſonable, that they joyn in their humiliations and ſorrow for it, and in their abhorrence of it. When the heart is heavy and ſad, the body alſo ſhould put on the habit of a mourner: Who laments the greateſt miſchief that could befal him.

In treating of which, I ſhall *Firſt* ſhow, what theſe outward expreſſions of ſorrow and grief are; and whence they ariſe. And then,

2. Briefly demonſtrate, that they have been the practice of Chriſtian people: Who ever thought the condition of a great ſinner ſo doleful, that it called for the bittereſt lamentations. And

3. Lay before you, as briefly, the uſes for which they ſerve; and the profit we may receive by them.

4. And laſtly, give ſome cautions, to prevent the abuſe of them; that we may not receive damage by thoſe things, which are intended for our advantage.

CHAP. III.

Concerning outward Acts of Sorrow.

WHAT the outward Acts of Sorrow are, which the ſenſe of their guilt extorts from true Penitents, we may learn from the Prophet *Joel*;

Joel; if we read ſeriouſly the 12. and 13. Verſes of the *ſecond* Chapter: Where God calls upon them to *turn unto him, with all their heart*; *and with faſting, and with weeping, and with mourning*, &c. The main thing here required, was to turn from their evil ways ſincerely, and without any reſerve: But an obſervant Reader cannot but take notice, that this was alſo to be performed, with *faſting*, and with *weeping*, and with *mourning*. Their *hearts* were to be *rent* in the firſt place, *and not their garments* (as it there follows) for otherways there was no hope they would *turn unto the Lord*: But their garments were to be rent alſo (it being a part of *mourning*) as the effect, and the declaration of the renting of the heart; and as a token they meant not to continue any longer in their ſins, but to part with them, and be intirely ſeparated from them.

But to prevent all fancies which may poſſibly ſtart up in any mans mind, that the duty I am about to recommend to them, is proper only to the Old Teſtament Spirit and

times (as ſome have been taught to ſpeak) I ſhall deſire the Reader only to ſtudy two other Verſes in the Epiſtle of *S. James:* Which comprehend, I think, all that belongs to this matter. They are *ver.* 9, 10. of the iv. Chapter; *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heavineſs. Humble your ſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up.*

He had exhorted them in the foregoing words, *Ver.* 8. to *draw nigh to God*, in a deep ſenſe that they were great ſinners, to acknowledge their guilt, to deprecate his diſpleaſure, and to reſolve to be better men; both by *cleanſing their hands*, and by *purifying their hearts:* And that with all ſincerity and ſingleneſs of Spirit; being no longer *double-minded*, (ſometimes reſolving to do well, and then revolting to their beloved ſins again) but thoroughly and intirely returning to him in New Obedience. And then, juſt as the Prophet *Joel* required the *Iſraelites* to *turn unto the Lord with all their heart; and with faſting, and with weeping, and with mourning:*

So

So the Apoſtle requires the Chriſtians to whom he writes, to *draw nigh to God* after the ſame manner; with upright hearts, and with no leſs, but rather greater tokens of their inward trouble that they had offended him. For he bids them not only *be afflicted*, and *mourn*, and *weep*: But to refrain from all mirth and joy, and to be in heavineſs: Without which *humiliations* it was not fit for great ſinners to preſent themſelves before an offended Majeſty, or to hope for mercy from Him.

Which words if we examine by the phraſes of the Old Teſtament, which are our beſt guides for the interpreting of the New; we ſhall find there is not one of them, but ſignifies ſome outward expreſſion of great grief and ſorrow: Which was uſed by devout people, in token of hearty Repentance.

When they kept their great Faſt, injoyned by the Law on the day of Expiation, it was called a *day of afflicting their Souls*, xvi. *Lev.* 29, 31. lviii. *Iſa.* 5. which explains the firſt word in *S. James*, and ſhows it to be the

the very ſame with that in *Joel*, *turn unto him with Faſting*.

And if we ſearch farther, wherein this *afflicting* themſelves conſiſted, we ſhall find an Explication of the reſt that follow. For it did not conſiſt barely in abſtinence from food; but in putting on alſo the habit of *mourners* (*ſackcloth and aſhes*) and in the action of *renting the garments*, in bewailing and lamenting their condition: which are the next phraſes in *S. James*, *mourn* and *weep*.

And if we ſtill proceed further in our enquiry, we ſhall find that on ſuch days of *afflicting* themſelves they alſo abſtained from all ſorts of pleaſure; they would not ſo much as waſh their faces, much leſs annoint their heads; no, nor look up, but hanged down their heads, in confuſion of face. Muſick and Songs were perfect ſtrangers to them; nor would they take any reſt; but they puniſhed their bodies with watchings, and lying on the bare ground: To teſtifie their ſorrow and grief for what evil they had done, or for the evils they felt or feared. And accordingly here it follows

lows in the Apoſtle, in perfect conformity to thoſe cuſtoms, *let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into heavineſs*, or into *hanging down of the head*, with ſhame and grief.

And if we go on to ſearch into the ground of all this, it will further illuſtrate the thing in hand. For it is viſible, that upon occaſion of any ſorrowful accidents, they were wont in thoſe Eaſtern Countries, to expreſs their ſenſe of it, by *putting on ſackcloth, lying on the ground, ſtrowing aſhes on their heads*, and ſuch like things. Which is notorious, more eſpecially, in caſe of the loſs of their Friends, and near Relations. Thus *Jacob* bewailed the ſuppoſed death of his Son *Joſeph*, xxxvii. *Gen.* 34, 35. And thus *Riſpah* the Concubine of *Saul* lamented her Children, whom the *Gibeonites* hanged on a Gibbet, 2 *Sam.* xxi. 10. and thus *Job*, when he heard of the calamity befaln his Family, *rent his mantle, ſhaved his head, fell down upon the ground, and remained in ſilence, without ſpeaking a word for ſeven days*, i. *Job* 20. and thus his Friends

Friends alſo, hearing of all this evil, and beholding, when they came to viſit him, in what a lamentable condition he lay himſelf, *lift up their voice and wept, and rent every man his mantle, and ſprinkled duſt upon their heads, and ſat down with him upon the ground in ſilence*, ii. *Job* 12, 13. Nor are there wanting numerous examples (which I ſhall omit) of the very ſame cuſtoms among other Nations, as well as among the *Jews* and theſe *Arabians*.

No wonder then if pious men, who were touched with a ſenſe of their ſin, and of the Divine diſpleaſure: uſed the very ſame ſigns and teſtimony of their grief, which were cuſtomary in other caſes, of far leſs conſequence. For what greater miſchief can befall us, than the loſs of Gods favour? or rather, what calamity is equal, or nearly approaching to it? And therefore there is more reaſon to bewail our offences againſt him (which put us out of his favour) moſt heavily, and with the moſt doleful tokens of our ſorrow for them; than there is to bewail the loſs of the deareſt Friend we

we have in this World, or the greateſt misfortune, as we term it, that can poſſibly befal us.

And accordingly we read that when holy *Job* humbled himſelf before God, for his too peremptory vindication of his own innocence, he doth it in the ſame manner, that he had bewailed his Afflictions, ſaying, *I abhor my ſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes*, xlii. 6. And the Prophets often call upon the *Iſraelites*, to put on ſackcloth, and to bewail themſelves in aſhes; when they would have them mourn for their ſins, and (as it is in 1 *Sam.* vii. 2.) *lament after the Lord:* that is, ſeek the recovery of his favour by an hearty Repentance.

For they did not think it fit, for grievous offenders to look up to him, whoſe authority they had affronted, without Tears in their Eyes; and a ſad and ſorrowful countenance; in the moſt mournful poſture and habit; and the bittereſt expreſſions of their grief and inward anguiſh: As knowing that they deſerved to be unprofitably bewailing their ſins in a more diſmal place, where there is Nothing,

but

but weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth.

Why? will ſome ſay; doth God delight to hear our ſhrieks and groans? or would you have us be our own Tormentors? Is it reaſonable a man ſhould be cruel to his own fleſh; and make it his buſineſs, to put himſelf to pain? There is Nothing from which humane Nature more abhors, than ſorrow and grief; and Nothing is more Friendly to it, than Pleaſure and Joy.

Ἅπαν τὸ λυπεῖν ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ νόσος.

Every thing that ſaddens and afflicts us, is a real Diſeaſe and Sickneſs: To which we cannot but be averſe, and by all means ſtudy to avoid.

Unto which I anſwer, as *Solon* did to one who told him when he wept for his Son, that he troubled himſelf, but profited Nothing by it, διὰ αὐτὸ γάρ τοι τοῦτο, ἔφη, κλαίω: That's the very reaſon, ſaid he, why I cannot but weep. So when men ſay, that Nature is hurt by Sorrow, the reply may juſtly be; that's one of the things

things which ſhould make you ſorrowful: To ſee how you have ſpoiled the Beauty and Goodlineſs of Humane Nature; how you have ſullied it by your ſins, and darkned the brightneſs and chearfulneſs of it; by Eclipſing the light of Gods countenance, which we were made to enjoy and to rejoyce therein; and cauſing this World to become Nothing but a Scene of Miſery, a place of mourning and lamentation; either for our ſins, or for our ſufferings.

It is a ſad ſight indeed to behold a Creature made for great Happineſs, to be now ſo altered, that in all the Creation there is not one ſo full of complaints as Man: But it will be a ſadder, if his firſt complaint be not of the cauſe of all this, which is our Sins. Theſe, if they be not ſorrowfully bewailed, are the moſt grievous and lamentable of all things elſe; in the account of thoſe who rightly weigh them.

But beſides this, we muſt conſider; that this is the way to make men leave their ſins; and ſo be reſtored to true Joy and Gladneſs. If they can take pleaſure

pleaſure in evil courſes, as well as in good, they will never be at the trouble of an exchange: Nor ſcarce think of it, till they be mourning there, where Tears will never ceaſe to flow, and drown them in Eternal Sorrows.

Nay, more than this, to think of our ſins without due ſorrow and grief for them, is in truth to repeat them. So far are they from leaving them, who are not grieved for them; that whenſoever they call them to mind without ſuch grief, it is in effect again to commit them. Their minds are pleaſed with them; and there they do that over again, which was done before in outward actions. Upon this ſcore therefore we are to be afflicted for them; and if we be, Mourning and Tears and ſad Lamentations will not be wanting, proportionable to the Affliction which they give our Spirits. According to that ſaying of *Philemon*,

--------- ἡ λυπὴ δ' ἔχει,
ὥσπερ τὸ δένδρον, τοῦτον καρπὸν, τὸ δάκρυον.

Grief,

Grief, like a Tree, hath Tears for its Fruit. Which ſpring out of Sorrow, as a natural expreſſion thereof: And are a means, as I ſhall ſhow more hereafter, to remove the cauſe. And what greater cauſe, as I have ſaid, is there for our grief and heavineſs, and all their mournful attendants, than this; that we have offended him by our ſins, who is able to puniſh them in endleſs Sorrows? When leſſer things produce ſometime a flood of Tears; we cannot but conclude, without any other reaſon for it, that they are juſtly expected, in a very great meaſure, here.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Chriſtian Practice in this matter.

AND thus the conſtant practice of the Chriſtian Church, hath expounded theſe words of *S. James*: By requiring ſuch Humiliations, Affliction, and Doleful bemoaning of them-

themselves, from those who had so grievously offended God, as to be thrown out of their Communion, before they would receive them again into it. Which is a thing so notorious, that by the word *Repentance*, among the ancient Writers of Religion, nothing else is commonly meant, but *open Confession of their Sins, with sad lamentations of them, and of the woful condition into which they had brought them.*

There are many remarkable things to this purpose in the Records of the Church, more than enough to fill a much bigger Book than this; if I would give my self liberty to relate with what humble prostrations, with what tears and doleful lamentations, *conciliciati & concinerati* (as *Tertullians* words are) covered with Haircloth, and buried, as it were, in Ashes, with Fastings and Watchings, with Sighs and Groans and mournful Voices, looking dismally lean, pale and meagre, by long grief and neglect of their Bodies, Penitents were wont to cast themselves down upon the Earth, and not only supplicate Gods

Gods mercy, but beg and beſeech in the moſt miſerable manner, the pardon and the prayers of their Chriſtian Brethren.

But my deſign is only to ſhow that all this, which was the unqueſtionable practice of the early Ages of the Church, had its foundation in the very beginning of our Religion, and was directed by the Apoſtles themſelves. Who when any ſinner was ſo ſenſleſs that he was not at all afflicted for the Crimes he had committed, ſo impudent that he was not aſhamed of the fouleſt wickedneſs (and therefore was to be excommunicated and cut off from the body of Chriſt) required the whole Church, to bewail his Sin and his Miſery, in the moſt ſad and mournful manner: And therefore we may be confident this was expected from the ſinner himſelf, when by this means he was awakned out of his Lethargy, to ſee into what a woful condition he had brought himſelf by his offences.

For this is the thing which *S. Paul* blames in the *Corinthian* Church, that when an eminent perſon among them had

had committed *ſuch Fornication, as was not ſo much as named among the Gentiles*, they were ſo far from being concerned about it, that they were *puffed up*, with a vain opinion of their dearneſs to God, becauſe of their Spiritual Gifts wherein they abounded. Whereas they ſhould *have rather mourned, that he who had done this deed, might be taken away from among them*, 1 *Corinth.* v. 1, 2. That is, they ſhould have met together in the Church, to ſeparate ſuch a perſon from their ſociety, with *wailings* and *lamentations* over him: In token of their own ſorrow for, and deteſtation of, ſo foul a fact; and that they looked upon him as a loſt man, till he recovered himſelf by Repentance, and mourned, as they had done, for his Sins.

The *Jews*, it is well known, when any man was to be puniſhed with death for Blaſphemy, and ſuch like Crimes, *proclaimed a Faſt* (as we read in the ſtory of *Naboth*, 1 *Kings* xxi.) that is, they mourned, and wept, they put on Sackcloth, and humbled themſelves; they did all other

other things of this nature, which might teſtifie their Sorrow that God ſhould be ſo diſhonoured, and the offender ſhould bring himſelf to ſuch a miſerable end. Which the Church thought it reaſonable to imitate, when they cut off any perſon from their Body (as a number of Eccleſiaſtical Writers inform us, and this paſſage in *S. Paul* inſtructed them) they Faſted, they Wept, they put themſelves into the habit of Mourners, and ſtript themſelves of their Ornaments; to declare their abhorrence of the ſins which were thus puniſhed, and to expreſs their Grief for the ſcandal they had given; which hereby they wiped off.

Nay, the Apoſtles themſelves (which is ſtill more) did not refrain from theſe Lamentations; but, when they in perſon executed this Sentence againſt any Sinner, humbled themſelves, and gave the moſt ſenſible tokens of their inward Grief and Sorrow. This we may learn from the ſame *S. Paul* in his next Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, Chapter xii. *Ver.* 20, 21.

Where,

Where, after he had mentioned ſeveral ſins which they had not reformed, he concludes in theſe words, *I fear leſt when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I ſhall bewail many which have ſinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanneſs, and fornication, and laſciviouſneſs which they have committed.* To *bewail* theſe men, was to puniſh them with Excommunication; which was accompanied with wailings and lamentations over them, as men in a ſad and moſt dangerous condition; and very much *humbled*, that is, Afflicted and Grieved the Apoſtles themſelves when they conſidered it: Who thought *God* himſelf expected it from them; for whoſe ſake, and to preſerve a due regard to his Sacred Majeſty, *S. Paul* foreſaw he muſt, in all likelihood, be forced to appear in the habit of a Mourner, when he came again among the *Corinthians*.

In ſhort, juſt as men mourn for their Friends who are dead corporally; ſo did they bewail thoſe who were dead Spiritually. Which they ought ſure much more to have done them-

themſelves; if there had been any ſenſe remaining in them, and they had not been dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins: And did bewail, no doubt, as ſoon as by this ſeverity they were awakened out of their ſleep, and aroſe from the dead (as *S. Paul* ſpeaks, v. *Epheſ.* 14.) that is, had any motion of Spiritual life appeared again in them, and were brought to a feeling of their lamentable condition.

Which lamentations of themſelves ſometimes continued ſo long, even by the inclination of the Penitents themſelves, that they did not think fit, when they had highly offended God, to leave them off, as long as they lived. The Deacons wife in *Aſia*, is a famous inſtance of it: Who having been ſeduced and corrupted in her body by *Marcus*, whom ſhe followed a long time, but at laſt by the diligence of the Brethren converted; ſpent all her days in Penance, bewailing and lamenting the corruption ſhe had ſuffered by that Magician: As

Epiphanius * relates out of *Irenæus*.

* *Hæres.* 34. *n.* 3. τὰ ἅπαντα χρόνον ἐξομολογουμένη διατέλεσε, πενθοῦσα καὶ θρηνοῦσα ἐφ' ᾗ ἔπαθεν ὑπὸ τοῦ Μάγου διαφθορᾷ.

Many ſuch obſervations might be heaped up, and more added out of the Holy Scriptures; but this is ſufficient, I think, to reform the Error, which is crept in among us, that *outward humiliations and bodily afflicting our ſelves, ſignify nothing in the Chriſtian Religion; but inward grief and ſorrow doth all.* This is not Apoſtolical Doctrine; and the Church of God hath always thought otherways. *S. Paul* himſelf teaches us, in another Epiſtle, that though *Godlineß* (all the actions of Chriſtian Piety) be the chief thing; yet *bodily exerciſe* is not to be lookt upon as altogether unprofitable, 1 *Tim.* iv. 8. *Bodily exerciſe profiteth little: but Godlineß is profitable unto all things*, &c. So we now read in our Printed Bibles [*profiteth little*] but I have reaſon to think the Tranſlation at firſt was, *profiteth a little:*

little: Becauſe in the Margent, referring it to time, it is Tranſlated thus, *or, for a little time* *. Which ſhows they thought there was ſome profit in Bodily exerciſe, though but little in compariſon with the profit of Godlineſs it ſelf. And ſo it is expreſſed in the *Greek* more clearly and fully, Bodily exerciſe is profitable, πρὸς ὀλίγον, *a little way* (as it may be rendred) ſerves to ſome purpoſe, and is uſeful in its kind. And therefore the Apoſtle doth not ſpeak ſlightingly of it (as men are apt to underſtand his words in our Tranſlation) but rather commends it; though with diminution, in reſpect of ſomething elſe, which was far better and more to the purpoſe.

* As *S. Auſtin* (*Cap.* 33. *de moribus Eccl. Cath.*) and moſt of the Ancients expound it.

Now by *Bodily exerciſe* I ſuppoſe no man is ſo weak as to imagine the Apoſtle meant ſuch Exerciſe as is neceſſary for the health, or the pleaſure and recreation of the Body (there being no occaſion to ſpeak of ſuch matters) but rather intended ſuch Exer-

ciſes as did afflict and impair the Body, and may help a little way to conſerve or reſtore the health of the Soul. Such as *faſtings*, *watchings*, *lying on the ground*, *eating the bread of affliction* (as the Scripture calls it) that is courſe Food, *abſtaining from conjugal pleaſures*, and in general, *all ill treatments of the Body*; which ſerved to humble it, and bring down the pride and wantonneſs of it. *Epiphanius* thus reckons them up; when he ſpeaks of the Exerciſes that accompanied their Prayers, in the week before *Eaſter* *.

* *Hæreſ.* lxxv. χαμεύνιαι, ἀγρυπνίαι, κακοπαθείαι, ξηροφαγίαι, εὐχαὶ, ἀγρυπνίαι τε καὶ νηστείαι, &c.

CHAP. V.

The uſe of Bodily Exerciſes.

THAT theſe Exerciſes are ſomething profitable, is the next thing I propounded to be treated of in this Diſcourſe. I am ſure they are

are very becoming a great offender, though they be the leaſt that God expects from him: And therefore they ought not to be utterly decried and diſgraced; while we teach there is ſomething much beyond them, without which they will do us but little good.

1. For *firſt*, they are natural expreſſions of the ſenſe a man hath of his own vileneſs and baſeneſs; and may very much conduce to promote it, and make him more apprehenſive of it.

2. And they are as natural expreſſions of the ſenſe he hath, of his abuſe of the good things which God allowed him to enjoy; and of his Grief and Sorrow, which that ſad reflection works in him.

3. They declare alſo a ſenſe of his unworthineſs to enjoy thoſe good things any longer: He acknowledging by his Faſting and Abſtinence (for inſtance) that his daily Bread, yea the leaſt morſel of it, is too good for him; and by his throwing off all his Ornaments, that he deſerves to be ſtript of all other Bleſſings,

which God hath adorned him withall.

4. They are a juſt acknowledgment likewiſe of his offences, which have made him thus unworthy: And plainly declare alſo that he looks with deteſtation upon thoſe evil courſes, which have made him not to look like himſelf.

5. Further, they are a ſign of a mans intention and purpoſe to alter the whole courſe of his life; and to become quite another man.

6. Nay, more than this, they are a beginning of Self-denial; and ſome ſmall Exerciſe of it, in things which fleſhly nature very much deſire: As we all know, it doth good Meat and Drink, fine Clothes, Eaſe, and all manner of Pleaſures.

7. And further, they may help alſo to mortifie the evil that is in any of thoſe deſires; and diſpoſe a man to avoid thoſe ſins more carefully hereafter, which have procured him ſo much Grief, Affliction, and Trouble. That is, they are not merely teſtifications of our grief for Sins paſt, and our deteſtation of what we have done amiſs;

amiss; which is the first part of Repentance: But, if they be rightly used, may prove a means to secure our resolution of amendment (which they also naturally testifie) and help to preserve us from revolting to those sins, of which we express so great detestation, and feel to be very afflictive; which is the other and best part of Repentance.

8. They may serve also to dispose a man to seriousness in Meditation and Prayer; by taking his thoughts off from all worldly things, as little or nothing worth.

9. More particularly, they may serve to raise in our mind, a due valuation of the happiness of the other World; when we despise all the enjoyments of this. Which was a Doctrine *S. Matthias* was wont to press. (as *Clemens Alexandrinus* reports his words *) σαρκὶ μὲν μάχεσθαι καὶ παραχρῆσθαι, &c. to oppose the Flesh, and to treat it ill; not suffering it to have its desires; ψυχὴν δ' ἄυξειν, but to nourish the Soul by Faith and by Knowledge: *For by substracting*

* *L.* iii. *Strom.* p. 436.

ſtracting from the Body, we make proviſion for the Souls increaſe in Wiſdom and Goodneſs. Which end of Abſtinence we are taught in the Collect for the firſt Sunday in Lent; wherein we pray, *that our Fleſh being ſubdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey his Godly motions in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs*, &c.

10. And, to omit other things, I ſee no reaſon why I ſhould not add, in the laſt place, that theſe ſeverities are acts of a juſt revenge, which a ſinner takes upon himſelf, for his former exceſſes; by Intemperance, Luxury, Impurity, Pride and Vainglory.

They are but juſt expreſſions of a due indignation againſt his paſt follies; and a becoming chaſtiſement, which he inflicts upon himſelf for his licentious way of living.

S. Paul himſelf mentions this *Revenge*, as the laſt effect of the *Corinthians* ſorrowing after a Godly ſort, 2 *Corinth.* vii. 11. *For behold, this ſelf-ſame thing that ye ſorrowed after a Godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought in you* (to ſatisfie the Apoſtle) *yea,*

yea, what clearing of your ſelves (of approving what he condemned) *yea, what indignation* (againſt the offender) *yea, what fear* (of the Apoſtolical Cenſures) *yea, what vehement deſire* (to recover, I ſuppoſe, the Apoſtles good opinion) *yea, what zeal* (for the Apoſtles authority, which ſome ſlighted) *yea, what revenge*; in inflicting puniſhments ſuitable to the offence.

By which word [*Revenge*] it is true (and I will not in the leaſt prevaricate in this Argument) the beſt Interpreters, and I believe rightly, underſtand the puniſhment lately inflicted, by the ſentence of Excommunication pronounced againſt the Inceſtuous perſon, according to the Apoſtles order. Yet it is manifeſt, I think, that this Revenge was taken by the Church, becauſe the man did not take it on himſelf. If he had been ſadly afflicted, if he had humbled himſelf by Faſting and Weeping and Mourning, by confeſſing his Sin, by confuſion of face, and all other ſigns of a true Penitent; the Church had not proceeded to ſuch a degree of ſe-

verity againſt him, as to deliver him up to Satan. And ſuch a Revenge, whether injoyned by the Church, or inflicted by a mans ſelf, the Apoſtle makes the fruit of a pious Sorrow.

That ſharp Grief wherewith the Heart is wounded, when it reflects upon its diſobedience to a moſt Gracious Father, thoſe Stings, which a mind conſcious of ſuch foul ingratitude, feels in it ſelf; that ſhame, that ſelf-diſplicency, and loathing, which ariſes out of a ſerious ſenſe of a mans offences, work in him ſuch a deteſtation of his former courſe of life; that it will incline him by afflicting and puniſhing himſelf, after ſuch a manner as I have deſcribed, to prevent the like again.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The Abuſe of theſe Exerciſes ought not to hinder the Uſe: wherein a further account is given of them.

AND this courſe ought not to be laid aſide, becauſe ſome have turned this juſt *Revenge*, by inflicting puniſhments upon themſelves, for ſuch ends as I have named, into a proper ſatisfaction of the juſtice of God. Which is the fault of the Church of *Rome*; who by abuſing many profitable things, have made others throw them quite away.

To fanſie any ſuch ſatisfaction, as they ſpeak of (which is variouſly explained by them, and by ſome very injuriouſly unto our Lord Chriſt) is to ſtretch the vertue of theſe things too far: But if we therefore ſhall wholly reject them, that will be to ſtart aſide as much the other way. The Church of God, in the pureſt times, before the

the birth of thoſe Errors, which are comprehended under the Name of Popery, moſt earneſtly recommended and enjoyned ſuch Afflictions of the Body, without any deſign of ſatisfying the Divine Juſtice for their Sins; & yet with an intention to puniſh themſelves for them: in hope that God would graciouſly ſpare them, and accept of their unfeigned Repentance; of which theſe were the ſigns and tokens; and alſo the beginnings of a new Life, and the means to bring it to greater perfection.

The very Faſt of Lent, was anciently prolonged to that number of days of which it now conſiſts, for the benefit of the publick Penitents, that were in the Church: Who by ſuch Humiliations, as I have mentioned, gave ſatisfaction to the Church (which was another end of their Afflicting themſelves) and humbly begging their pardon, promiſed hereafter to be better Chriſtians: and ſo prepared themſelves to be reconciled, and admitted to the Holy Communion at *Eaſter*.

It

It would be endleſs to recite all the paſſages we meet with in Eccleſiaſtical Writers, concerning this matter; that Penitents ſhould by ſuch Bodily Afflictions, as have been often named, take Revenge upon themſelves for their former wickedneſs; and undo what they had done before, by doing juſt the contrary.

S. Chryſoſtom mentioning thoſe words of *John* Baptiſt, *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for Repentance*, puts this queſtion, How may we thus fructifie? And reſolves it in this manner; If we do directly contrary to our former Sins. Haſt thou ſtoln another mans Goods? begin now to give away thine own. Haſt thou been a Fornicator, abſtain even from thy lawful Bed. Haſt thou wronged any one in words, as well as deeds? bleſs hereafter even thoſe that curſe thee; do good to thoſe who reproachfully uſe thee. Such Revenge as this is very neceſſary; for a wounded man, as he adds, muſt not only pull the Dart out of his Body, but apply alſo ſuitable remedies to his Wound. Haſt thou therefore flowed in Luxury and

in

in Drunkenneſs? make a compenſation for it by Faſting and Abſtinence. Haſt thou caſt impure Eyes upon anothers Beauty? cover thy Eyes, and hang down thy head; being touched with a greater caution, by the harm thou haſt received.

And thus *Tertullian*, long before him, gives this brief admonition; If thy Neighbour ask thee, why thou defraudeſt thy ſelf of thy Food, and art ſo Afflicted, *&c.* tell him, *Deliqui in Deum*, &c. I have offended God, I am in danger to periſh Eternally: And therefore now I hang down my head for ſhame, I macerate and excruciate my ſelf; that God, whom I have injured by my ſins, may be reconciled to me, *&c.*

L. de Pœnit. C. xi.

Gregory the Great, though much later than either of them, hath left this excellent Gloſs upon the words before-mentioned. You muſt obſerve that the Friend of the Bridegroom (he means *John* Baptiſt) calls not only for *fruits of Repentance*, but for *fruits meet*, or worthy and becoming Repentance.

Repentance. It being one thing to *bring forth fruit*; another to *bring forth meet or worthy fruit*. For you muſt know, that he who hath not committed unlawful things, may juſtly uſe thoſe which are lawful: But he that hath done unlawful things, for inſtance hath faln into the guilt of Fornication, or which is worſe, of Adultery, he ought to deny himſelf even thoſe that are lawful; in proportion to the unlawful, which he remembers he hath given himſelf the liberty to enjoy. For there ought not to be equal fruits of Repentance from thoſe who have offended little, and from thoſe who have offended much (from thoſe who ſince they have been devoted to God have led a regular life, and from thoſe who have been very extravagant) but every one, according as he hath broken his vow to God, leſs or more; with more or leſs expreſſions of Grief and Sorrow he ought to addreſs himſelf to God for Mercy.

I will add only the words of *S. Ambroſe* to a corrupted Virgin. According to the weight of the guilt, muſt be

be the greatneſs of the Repentance: And therefore thou muſt not Repent in word only, but in deeds. Which may be thus done: If thou ſetteſt before thine Eyes from what a great dignity thou art faln, from what a Book of Life thy name is blotted out: And ſo believeſt thy ſelf to be juſt next door to utter darkneſs, where there is endleſs weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. When thou haſt repreſented this to thy ſelf by Faith, then (ſince the Soul that ſins is liable to be caſt into Hell fire, and there is no remedy, after Baptiſm, but only the comfort of Repentance) be content to endure any Affliction, any Labour, any ſordid uſage of thy ſelf; if thou mayeſt but be delivered from Eternal pains: And, if thou wilt be guided by me, be thou thy ſelf the more cruel Judge of thy own fact. If the ſinner (as it follows a little after) would not ſpare himſelf, God would ſpare him. If he would put himſelf to ſhort pain here in this Life, he might eſcape Eternal pain in the future. A great wound muſt be ſearcht into carefully, and have a long Cure.

A great ſin muſt neceſſarily have a great ſatisfaction.

So he calls thoſe acts of faithful Penitents, Confeſſion, Weeping, Mourning, neglect of their Bodily culture, Prayers, Faſtings, Alms, lying on the Ground, wearing Sackcloth, and ſuch like things as were then in uſe; by the name of *Satisfaction.* Not becauſe he thought they could properly make a compenſation to God for their paſt crimes, and merit his pardon: but becauſe they were pleaſing and acceptable to him, when they were true ſignifications of the inward compunction of their Hearts; as well as gave ſatisfaction to the Church, which enjoyned theſe Penances, to take off the ſcandal that had been caſt upon Religion by their Sins. For *he ſatisfies another, that doth what he requires of him.* Now God himſelf requires this of a Sinner, that he *be afflicted and mourn, and weep, and have his laughter turned into mourning, and his joy into heavineſs*, &c.

And if *he had* not required it; yet Nature it ſelf preſſes us to it, when we are rightly affected towards him.

For

For it is ſcarce poſſible, as Mr. *Calvin* well obſerves, That a Soul ſtruck with the dread of the divine Judgment, ſhould not exact this of it ſelf: and teach a man to prevent the vengeance of God, by being himſelf the avenger of his own Sins. And the ſeverer, ſaith he, we are to our ſelves, and the ſharper cenſure we paſs upon our Sins; the more propitious and merciful we may hope God will be unto us.

L. iii. *Inſtit. Cap.* 3. *Sect.* 15.

Which he ſeems to have borrowed from *Tertullian*, in his Book of Repentance; where he hath theſe known words. When Repentance throws a man on the ground, it ſupports and relieves him. When it makes him all ſqualid, it renders him the more pure and clean. It excuſes, when it accuſes him. It abſolves, when it condemns. And the leſs thou ſpareſt thy ſelf, believe me, the more will God ſpare thee.

Cap. ix. & x.

Which is agreeable to the Doctrine of *S. Paul*, in the 1 *Corinth.* xi. 31. That, *if we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould*

ſhould not be judged of the Lord. It is certain, that the *judgment*, which he would have had the *Corinthians* prevent, by judging themſelves; was the ſharp Chaſtiſements which God inflicted upon that Church, by *Sickneſs*, *Weakneſs*, and *Death*; as we read in the Verſe foregoing. In few words, it was his inflicting puniſhments upon them for their ſins: and therefore it is moſt reaſonable to think that this is the *judgment* he would have them paſs upon themſelves; which might, as I ſaid, have prevented that judgment of God, and ſtill might remove it. They ſhould have afflicted and chaſtiſed themſelves in a contrite manner, with Faſtings and Mournings, and bewailing of their Sins, and other Humiliations: that ſo there might have been no need of Gods inflicting puniſhments upon them for their reformation, which they had already begun to inflict on themſelves. For if by being *judged* in the latter part of the Verſe, be meant being puniſhed (which is unqueſtioned) it ſeems the moſt agreeable interpretation of

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judging our ſelves in the former part, if we underſtand thereby puniſhing our ſelves by that ſevere diſcipline, which I am treating of.

It is true indeed (for I will diſſemble nothing that I know, nor ſtrain any paſſage of Scripture to juſtifie this Doctrine) that the word we render *judge* in the beginning of the Verſe, is not the very ſame with that which is in like manner ſo rendred by us in the concluſion: But in the *Greek* there is ſome difference, when he ſaith, *if we would judge our ſelves* (which is εἰ διακρίνομεν) from the other, *we ſhould not be judged*, which is οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα. And it is further true, that *S. Chryſoſtom* and *Oecumenius* there expreſly note, that the Apoſtle doth not ſay εἰ ἐκολάζομεν, if we would puniſh our ſelves, but only if we would ſentence and condemn our ſelves as Sinners: which they take to be the import of the word διακρίνειν.

But this notwithſtanding, I cannot think the infliction of ſuch puniſhments upon themſelves, as are the ſubject of this Diſcourſe (which are of

of a different kind from those inflicted by God, and so expressed by a different word) are here excluded. For to what do men sentence and condemn themselves (which *S. Chrysostom* makes the meaning of the word) but to suffer all that a just Judge shall inflict; if he deal with them according to their deserts? And how could they think of inflicting less chastisements upon themselves, than such Humiliations, as were then in use; whereby they acknowledged themselves to be unworthy to live?

In which, saith the Apostle, if they had not favoured themselves, but pronounced and executed that sentence which their sins justly deserved; they might have been spared by God: and not punished, as some were, by those Sicknesses and Infirmities, nay, Death, which he sent among them.

So that the full import of that word *judge our selves*, I conceive to be this. If you had strictly examined your selves, and made an exact difference (so the word is expounded *Ver.* 29.) between your selves, and those who had no sense of their irreverent behaviour

viour towards our Lord; if you had acknowledged your Errors, and condemned your ſelves for them, and deprecated his diſpleaſure by due Humiliations, and ſtudied amendment; he would not have handled you in this manner, by ſending a terrible Plague upon you. For it cannot reaſonably be denied, that in this *judging* or *condemning* themſelves (Tranſlate it how you pleaſe) all things are contained, which were or ought to have been, the effects and fruits thereof: As in *confeſſion of Sin*, the Scripture includes Repentance, and the fruits of Repentance, or amendment of Life: And in the *Exomologeſis* of the ancient Chriſtians, the whole buſineſs of Penance was contained; as appears ſufficiently, by the ſtory I related of the Deacons Wife in *Aſia*. Now ſuch Humiliations as I have treated of, were the effects of their condemning themſelves; when they were deeply guilty, and as deeply ſenſible of their guilt. Which the *Corinthians* were not; and ſo did not ſue out their pardon, in ſuch a humble and afflicted manner,

manner, as became ſuch groſs offenders: For if they had, they ſhould not have faln under ſuch a ſevere diſcipline of Heaven, as to have been *cut off* (which the *Jews* ſay was always by the hand of Heaven) from the Land of the living.

In plainer terms (which I take to be the trueſt Interpretation of all) if the Church had judged, condemned and exerciſed its Cenſures, as it ought to have done upon ſuch offenders, and puniſhed them for their faults: thoſe puniſhments from the hand of God might have been ſpared.

And that's the cauſe ſtill perhaps, why many publick judgments of God fall upon us in theſe days; becauſe the Church is negligent in calling offenders to an account: And they will not judge, that is Afflict, themſelves for their Offences. There are great numbers, I doubt not, who condemn their Sins in their own Conſciences; and condemn themſelves alſo for them, to deſerve puniſhment from God: And this they imagine to be ſufficient, to make them capable of his Mercy and Forgiveneſs.

Whereas

Whereas they ought to humble themſelves with Faſting, and Weeping, and Mourning; with neglect of their Bodies, confeſſion of their Guilt, confuſion of Face, lamentable deprecations of Gods diſpleaſure, Prayers, and Supplications, with works of Mery: which ought always to accompany Faſting and Prayer; as moſt becoming thoſe who ask mercy of God, and as a Revenge upon themſelves for their Covetouſneſs and too great love of this preſent World. And becauſe grievous ſinners do not thus Afflict themſelves, with an unfeigned reſolution of amendment, God himſelf is pleaſed to afflict them; by ſending his Plagues upon them, in one ſort or other to puniſh them.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Some Cautions to prevent miſunderſtanding in this matter.

THUS having proved what I undertook, that we ought not to content our ſelves with inward Sorrow alone, without all outward Humiliations; and ſhown the uſe they have in Religion: I proceed now, according to the method laid down in the beginning, to give ſome Cautions, to prevent the miſunderſtanding, or abuſe of this Doctrine.

1. And firſt of all I would not be underſtood, as if I thought they were of ſuch an indiſpenſable neceſſity that it is impoſſible for any ſinner to obtain Remiſſion and Abſolution without them. No, the very Hiſtory of the Goſpel ſhows the contrary: In which we find our Saviour, who *came to call ſinners to Repentance*, forgave ſeveral perſons; who did not, like that woman in the vii. of *S. Luke*, *Kiſs his very feet, waſh them with her tears,*

and wipe them with the hair of her head. All which were acts of great Humiliation; especially the last: wherein she imployed that to the meanest use, which had been before her principal Ornament and her pride.

My meaning therefore is, that these things are very useful (as hath been shown) and in some cases necessary: when Penitents have been very licentious livers; and it is not likely they will otherwise be sufficiently sensible of what they have done, and of what they have deserved; nor be so humbled, as to be reclaimed and brought off from their evil courses.

2. They therefore who have constantly led a regular life, and are guilty only of the smaller sort of Offences, must not take these things as spoken to them (unless it be on some occasions, which shall be presently mentioned) which are intended for gross and scandalous Sinners. Such as that woman now named, who was a known Harlot: unto whom our Lord forgave a great deal; when little was forgiven unto *Simon*, who did none of these things, vii. *Luke* 46, 47.

3. Yet

3. Yet it may be very neceſſary even for thoſe to take this courſe, who are not ſuch heinous Offenders; in caſe of frequent relapſes into the ſame ſin: which muſt be cured by uſing themſelves ſomething ſeverely. For though ſeldom ſlips (of the Tongue ſuppoſe) may be eaſily corrected: yet frequent returns to folly, and that after ſolemn reſolutions to the contrary, will require more pains and great Humiliations; as a means not only to give a ſtop to them, but to extirpate ſuch roots of bitterneſs.

4. The beſt alſo ought to Afflict themſelves, in times of publick calamity; and upon days of ſolemn Humiliation: when men are naturally diſpoſed to that which may ſignifie their ſeriouſneſs, ſobriety, ſorrow, and unworthineſs of the Bleſſings they come to beg of the Father of Mercies.

5. By which every one may underſtand that theſe Humiliations are not always in ſeaſon; as inward grief and ſorrow is: But upon ſuch occaſions as I have mentioned; and alſo at certain appointed times, which the Church hath fixed, either *Weekly*, or

Yearly; for Humiliation in general for our own and other mens Sins; or for the bewailing those in particular who have deserved the Censures of the Church, when they are executed on them. Of which more hereafter.

6. At all which times care must be taken, that these Humiliations be true significations of our inward grief, and proceed from thence: And not merely external shews, used for fashions sake, and to comply with the season. For without inward grief and resolutions to be better, they are so far from procuring any favour from God, that we may justly fear they further incense him; as being but a kind of mockery of him. Which made the Prophet *Joel*, in the place above named, bid the *Israelites rend their hearts, and not their Garments:* Not intending hereby to forbid the rending their Garments (which he had in effect called for, in the preceding words) but requiring them not to content themselves with that alone. Because that was but a signification and token; and a sign, where there was nothing really signified thereby,

thereby, could be nothing worth: But rather an abomination in the ſight of God. Who counts it a vile piece of Hypocriſie, when we preſent him with ſignifications, which in truth ſignifie nothing; there being nothing within, like to that which appears without.

7. And further, this caution muſt be uſed, that by theſe Exerciſes, we neither deſtroy the health of our Bodies, nor ſuffer any ill affection to be bred in our Minds. We ought not to make our ſelves ſick with Faſting; nor ſo weaken our ſelves by hard uſage, as to become unfit for our imployments. And greater care ought to be taken, that we do not grow moroſe and ſowre, peeviſh and untoward unto others; while we are ſevere unto our ſelves. And that the keeping our ſelves under a ſtrict diſcipline, do not beget a ſecret pride in us; which makes us to think very highly of our ſelves, and to contemn and deſpiſe others: Juſt as the conceited *Phariſee*, did the poor *Publican*; in the xviii. *S. Luke* 11, 12.

But above all, we muſt be watchful that ſuch pride do not creep herewith into our hearts; as tempts men to fanſie they have by this diſcipline, highly merited at the hands of God, whom they had grievouſly offended.

Let ſuch Rocks as theſe be avoided; and then theſe bodily Exerciſes, in their ſeaſon and due meaſure, may prove very profitable: being deſigned for ſuch other ends and uſes as I have named; particularly, as a means to prevent our relapſing into ſuch ſins, as have coſt us much affliction and trouble.

8. But *laſtly*, I deſire it may be noted, that I do not pretend any obligation or fitneſs either, for the uſe of all and every, the very ſame tokens of inward grief, and of the ſenſe we have of our vileneſs, whereby it was expreſſed in ancient days: But we are rather to declare the ſame thing, by other ſigns which are more ſuitable to our own times.

For the reaſon, I have ſhown, why they ſat down in Sackcloth and Aſhes when they humbled themſelves before God, in the days of old; was, be-

cauſe

cause then it was the custom of Mourners, in that manner to express the sense they had of the loss, which they bewailed. But now that custom is quite antiquated; at least, in these parts of the World there are no such things used by those that lament any worldly loss: And therefore we are no more bound to wear Sackcloth on our Bodies, and throw Ashes on our Heads, when we humble our selves, and mourn for our Sins, than we are to rend our Garments; which is not used in those Churches, where the other is still thought fit to be retained. But we are, as I said, to express the same thing, by other signs and tokens: which are more proper to the age and the place wherein we live.

Now they that Mourn (for a near Relation, or Friend suppose) in these Countries, are still wont to forbear their meat, to abstain from all manner of pleasures, to neglect the care and culture of their Bodies, to retire themselves from company, to lay aside business, to shut up themselves in private, to cover their faces, to keep silence, to bewail their loss, and

to refuſe preſently to be comforted. And thus it will become thoſe who have highly offended God, to bemoan and lament themſelves after the ſelf-ſame manner; when they are in good earneſt grieved for their Sins.

As for whipping and lacerating the Body, I do not find that it was ever uſed in the Church anciently, either under the Old Teſtament or the New: But there are plain indications rather, that they lookt upon it as a Paganiſh cuſtom, which they were not to imitate. And indeed it repreſents God under a vile Notion, as if he delighted in our bloud, and was in love with cruelty: Nor is there any thing like it to be found, in the Penances anciently injoyned in the Chriſtian Church; and therefore it is not to be approved. But ſuch expreſſions of grief and ſorrow are only to be uſed, as Nature and the cuſtom of the Country direct us unto, in other caſes of diſtreſs and ſadneſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The Uſe which Wicked men ought to make of this Doctrine.

BY what hath been briefly ſaid in this Argument, all Wicked men, who have highly provoked God by their lewd way of living, may ſee (if they pleaſe to open their Eyes) into what a woful condition they have brought themſelves: being unworthy to Eat, or Drink, to lift up their Eyes unto Heaven, to enjoy the light of the Sun, or any of the leaſt of thoſe common Bleſſings which God beſtows upon all Creatures; as ſincere Penitents have been conſtrained to acknowledge, by their deep Humiliations, Dejections and Abaſement of themſelves, even to the Earth, before his offended Majeſty.

So evil and bitter a thing it is to depart from God, and to caſt his holy Laws behind our backs (with neglect, if not contempt) in the opinion of all thoſe, who have been awakened

to a lively sense of Him, and of the duty which is owing to Him. And whensoever they that now make a mock of Sin, shall become so serious as to reflect upon their ways, and consider solemnly how they have opposed God, and set themselves against his Authority, it will strike them with the like consternation and amazement: And they will not think fit, so much as to look up unto Him whom they have so insolently affronted, without Tears in their Eyes, and with a most sad and sorrowful Countenance.

Nay, the most dejected looks are best becoming great Offenders; and the most doleful lamentations ought to come out of their mouths; if silence, confusion, astonishment, laying their hands on their mouths, or putting their mouths in the dust, be not much more beseeming: When they remember, that they deserve to be thrust down into utter darkness, there to bewail their mad contempt of God in extream horror and anguish of Spirit.

And

And this is but the first step neither to the recovery of Gods favour; unto which they should be glad upon any terms to be restored: and have just reason to look upon it as a bad sign, if they expect to recover it, upon easier conditions than these. They have too slight thoughts of their misdoings, who look upon this injunction as too harsh and severe: *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into heavineß. Humble your selves, in the sight of the Lord,* &c. For if mens hearts be rightly affected, they will not only readily accord to this; but think they are very kindly used, if they be after all received to Mercy.

Nay, every honest heart will judge it reasonable that his sorrowful Humiliations should bear some proportion to the offences, of which he stands guilty. The more he hath provoked Gods displeasure, the more he will be displeased at himself: His affliction will be the heavier; his sorrow the deeper and sadder; his loathing of himself the more vehement, as a very

very abominable Creature; and conſequently he will lay himſelf the lower, and be the more abaſed, when he comes to ſue for pardon.

There is nothing ſtranger than the careleſsneſs of men about their Souls, in this regard; as *S. Chryſoſtom* excellently diſcourſes, in the beginning of his Comments upon the Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*. You ſhall ſee many, ſaith he, bath themſelves in Tears, and refuſe to be comforted, for a great many days (his phraſe is Μυρίας ἡμέρας, a thouſand days) becauſe they have loſt ſome dear Friend, a Child, or ſome other Relation, whom God hath taken out of the World. But though they loſe their precious Souls every day, they ſcarce ever lay it to heart: but ſlightly paſs it over with a few ſighs, at the beſt. Nay, where ſhall we find the man, that is ſo much as ſorry for what he hath done? who is there that groans, that ſmites his Breaſt, that is full of Solicitude, and Care, and Fear, leſt he be undone? Οὐδένα ἔγωγ' εἶμαι· I think there is none: I am not acquainted with them: they are not to be met withal, who

who are concerned about their Souls; though they periſh with a remedy juſt at hand.

But what a retchleſneſs is this? How doſt thou think to be reconciled to God, when thou art not ſo much as ſenſible that thou haſt offended?

Thou wilt ſay; but I do confeſs my ſins; I condemn my ſelf for them. True, thou ſayſt ſo with thy mouth; but let thy heart tell me ſo. Sigh deeply at that word: Sigh ſo ſadly, that thou mayſt ever hereafter be of good chear. For if we did worthily grieve for our ſins, if we ſighed heartily for our offences; nothing elſe would make us ſad: but this one trouble would drive away all other ſadneſs. Thus he.

And then we may be bold to think we have *worthily lamented our ſins*, and bewailed our wretched eſtate; when the affliction it hath given us, makes us more fearful to offend hereafter. If we can find in our hearts, ſo much as to play with the occaſions of thoſe ſins, which we have lamented; if we gaze with ſome pleaſure upon the bait which intices us to them;

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But what a retchleſneſs is this? How doſt thou think to be reconciled to God, when thou art not ſo much as ſenſible that thou haſt offended?

Thou wilt ſay; but I do confeſs my ſins; I condemn my ſelf for them. True, thou ſayſt ſo with thy mouth; but let thy heart tell me ſo. Sigh deeply at that word: Sigh ſo ſadly, that thou mayſt ever hereafter be of good chear. For if we did worthily grieve for our ſins, if we ſighed heartily for our offences; nothing elſe would make us ſad: but this one trouble would drive away all other ſadneſs. Thus he.

And then we may be bold to think we have *worthily lamented our ſins*, and bewailed our wretched eſtate; when the affliction it hath given us, makes us more fearful to offend hereafter. If we can find in our hearts, ſo much as to play with the occaſions of thoſe ſins, which we have lamented; if we gaze with ſome pleaſure upon the bait which intices us to them;

them; if we love our old wicked company; or be so bold as to venture into it; if we draw as near a sin as we dare: it is a sign we do not sufficiently abhor it, nor have been sorrowful enough for it. For that would have made us more shy, more wary, more timorous of relapsing into so dangerous an estate; and afraid to approach near to those snares, wherein we had been intangled; and thereby suffered such affliction, as can never be recompensed with any pleasures, but those of pleasing God in all things.

Let us not deceive our selves then; no not with sorrow and affliction of Spirit, and the greatest Humiliations before God; if they be not attended with a change in the whole course of our life. Till sorrow hath wrought this effect, we have no reason to think that we have sorrowed after a Godly sort. We lay aside the afflicting our selves too soon, and speak comfort to our Souls before they be fit for it: If our grief hath not made an absolute divorce between us and our sins; never to come together again.

For

For ſo the Apoſtle teaches us in that known place, 2 *Cor.* vii. 10. *Godly ſorrow worketh repentance to Salvation, not to be repented of.* Sorrow is an unprofitable thing, unleſs it work Repentance: and Repentance is unprofitable, if it be only a good fit, and we return again to the ſins which we renounced. Let us not conclude therefore too haſtily that we are Penitents. Sorrow alone doth not make us ſo; no, nor a preſent change in the courſe of our life: but that change muſt continue and hold out when we come to be tried, and are placed again among our uſual temptations. Of which till we have had ſome experience, let us be modeſt, not confident, in the opinion we have of our Godly ſorrow: And judge rather we have not ſufficiently lamented our ſins, than ſpeedily pronounce our ſelves abſolved from them.

It was the cuſtom in the Primitive Church, for thoſe who were upon the point of ſuffering Martyrdom for Chriſt, to write Letters before they died, in the behalf of lapſed Chriſtians, who were in the ſtate of Penance: deſiring

desiring the Bishops that they might be reconciled and received to the peace of the Church. But good Bishops would not easily consent to this, unless they saw real signs of amendment in the Penitents: And they likewise earnestly desired the Martyrs not to be too easie in granting these Letters, or in promising to sue for them; but to consider how solicitous their Predecessors were to have such Sinners truly humbled, and how cautious to observe the kind and quality of the sins, which they lamented in the state of Penance. Nay, there were some Martyrs so wise as to reprove this giving of the peace of the Church, before they were so humbled as to be reformed, *Nè dum volumus ruinis importunè subvenire, alias majores ruinas videamur parare* (as I find *Moses* and *Maximus* and other Confessors speak most judiciously, in *S. Cyprian*, who himself hath an admirable discourse to the same purpose) lest while we desire unseasonably to raise up lapsed Christians out of their ruines; we make way for their greater fall, and utterly undo them.

They

They took care ſo to heal one breach, as not to make another and more dangerous: So to cure a wound, as not to make a new one, harder to be cured: So to reſtore Penitents, that they did not relapſe into a more deplorable condition. For they ſaw clearly that by ſpeaking peace to them too ſoon, before they were ſo ſoundly humbled and grievouſly afflicted, as to be heartily eſtabliſhed in new reſolutions, they became leſs fearful to offend; and lookt not ſo carefully to their ways, as they would have done, if they had ſuffered more for their former offences.

Let us take the ſame care about our own Souls; and not be too forward to conclude we have made our peace with God, though we have been never ſo ſorrowful: when there are no credible ſigns that we are ſo afflicted for what we have done, as never to venture to do the like again. No Prince will pardon upon other terms: and it is directly againſt all reaſon to think, that the Sovereign of the World will be content to loſe all the Obedience, which is owing from his Creatures;

Creatures; whom he hath made with a ſenſe of Duty to him. No cries, though lamentable beyond all expreſſion, can perſwade him to this; and therefore it is fooliſh and preſumptuous to expect it: eſpecially ſince he hath declared the contrary, and told us as plainly, as words can expreſs it, that *the wrath of God is revealed againſt all unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs of men*, i. *Rom.* 18. and that *except we be converted and become like little Children* (pliable to the Will of our Heavenly Father) *we cannot enter into his Kingdom*, xviii. *Matth.* 3. Which our Saviour pronounces with ſuch an earneſt aſſeveration, as is apt to awaken our attention to what he ſays there, and in many other places: which is utterly inconſiſtent with the imagination; that it is ſufficient to diſpoſe us for his favour, if we acknowledge our Errors, and be ſorry for them, and bewail them; without any further alteration.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

What Uſe the Better ſort ought to make of this.

AND as our Tears ought not to ſtop, till they have wrought a thorough alteration in our hearts, and in the courſe of our life: So, after that is wrought, there will be ſtill occaſion for them, and they muſt not be quite dried up. My meaning is, that they who by the grace of God have reformed their lives, and done away their former ſins by an unfeigned ſorrowful Repentance; (or they who perhaps never highly offended God, but have been only guilty of ſmaller faults) ought not to think themſelves wholly unconcerned in this Doctrine, and to have no cauſe for being afflicted; with ſuch mourning, weeping, and Humiliations, as I have mentioned. They have great reaſon indeed to *rejoyce in the Lord always*, and to praiſe him for his wonderful goodneſs towards them: But this is ſo far from

ſhutting

ſhutting out all ſorrow, that it is a part of that holy life unto which they are renewed by Repentance, to be full of tender compaſſion towards others, and to bewail their miſerable condition.

And therefore, beſide ſome degree of ſadneſs and ſorrow, which is due for leſſer offences, or for greater formerly committed, though now amended; there are two things which are really very lamentable, and ought to be ſadly laid to heart by the beſt of us. *Firſt*, the publick Judgments which God at any time ſends upon the Place or Kingdom where we live. *Secondly*, the obſtinate wickedneſs of moſt offenders; who notwithſtanding theſe Judgments, will not *turn unto him that ſmiteth them, nor ſeek the Lord*, as the Prophets words are, ix. *Iſa.* 13.

I. When people will not *judge* themſelves (as I have ſaid before in the vi. Chapter) and the offenders are ſo many, that the Church, perhaps, cannot *judge*, that is puniſh, them: God takes the matter into his own hand, and ſome way or other inflicts ſuch

ſuch puniſhments on them, as he did upon the *Corinthians*. In which caſe, the few good that are among them, ought to lament them and weep over them; as they ſhould have done if the Cenſures of the Church had been denounced and executed upon them. For which there is the greater reaſon, becauſe as they are members of the ſame Body, ſo they are in danger to ſuffer with them in the ſame common calamity; eſpecially, if they do not humble themſelves, to deprecate Gods heavy diſpleaſure.

If we make a particular application of this to our ſelves, in this Nation; we are very blind if we do not ſee that the hand of God, as the Prophet ſpeaks, hath been divers ways, ſtretched out againſt us; in a deſtroying Peſtilence, even then when the Sword of War was alſo drawn, between us and our Neighbours; and afterwards in a devouring Fire, whereby many fair Buildings, and Holy Places were laid in Aſhes: which are things that ought not to be forgotten, though, alas! they little now affect mens Minds. And therefore

fore we have been again terrified by the great hazard the Church and Kingdom was lately in; when their old Enemies strugled once more to get the upper-hand, and had brought us even to the brink of the Precipice: where we stood for some time trembling to think what would become of us. And though we were then mercifully delivered; yet when we consider how restless the Spirit of Sedition and Rebellion hath been since among us, and brought us again so near the very same dreadful danger, that we were just upon the point of beholding all Order and Government over-turned: All serious Christians cannot but think that *this is a lamentation*, as the Prophets words are, *and ought to be for a lamentation.*

The prevention indeed of that utter Confusion, by a wonderful Providence, ought to fill our hearts with joy: But the thoughts of such frequent Calamities which have threatned us, ought to put us in Fear also, lest in conclusion they should fall upon us; if neither Gods mercies, nor his Judgments can amend us. The only

only way to keep them off is, for all good men and women to humble themſelves, and weep in ſecret for theſe things. On which they cannot caſt their Eyes ſeriouſly, to take a view of them; but they will find them ſoliciting their Tears and their Sighs; and hear them call upon them to be *afflicted and mourn*, and *to let their joy* (ſometimes at leaſt) *be turned into heavineſs*. This alone is a ſad and melancholy ſight, to behold the Spirit of Blindneſs and Giddineſs, of Faction and Rebellion, that hath ſeized on a great part of the Nation: Our ſenſeleſs Contentions and Oppoſitions; the wide Breaches and Diviſions, for which we can ſee no Healing, may juſtly challenge, (if there were nothing elſe to trouble us) *great thoughts, and ſearchings of heart*.

II. Eſpecially if we conſider the other thing; not only how inſenſible moſt people are of all ſuch matters, (which in bodily diſtempers is counted the worſe ſymptom in the world) but how few have been amended by the publick Judgments which have either threatned us, or faln upon us.

The

The complaint which God makes by the Prophet (ii. *Jer.* 30.) may ſtill be continued, *In vain have I ſmitten your Children, they received no correction:* And which the Prophet makes to God (*Ver.* 3.) *O Lord, are not thine Eyes upon the truth? Thou haſt ſtricken them, but they have not grieved; thou haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive correction: They have made their faces harder than a Rock, they have refuſed to return.* For which ſtubborn impiety, and impudent wickedneſs (which hath every where too much abounded among us) every good man ought to be very much afflicted: and not only content himſelf with this, that he doth not follow them in their ungodly practices; but *bewail alſo as many as have ſinned, and have not Repented* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* xii. *ult.*) *of the Uncleanneſs, and Fornication, and Laſciviouſneſs* (and other abominable ſins) *which they have committed.*

For this is really the ſaddeſt ſpectacle of all other, to behold ſuch numbers as have not been at all touched with any remorſe for their own Sins;

Sins; nor any grief for publick Calamities; nor any Fear of future danger. But have taken their pleaſures to the full, in the moſt ſorrowful times, that this Nation hath ſeen; and would not abate of their mirth and laughter in the leaſt, when all things lookt cloudily about them; but incouraged one another to think only of eating and drinking, and riſing up to play: which all ſober men cannot but look upon, to be as unſeemly a ſight; as if men ſhould go and dance about their Parents, or neareſt Relations, when they ſaw them a dying.

The ancient *Pythagoræans* were wont when any perſon forſook their School, to ſet a Coffin in the place, where he uſed to ſit: And then to make a ſolemn Funeral for him; bewailing him with their Tears, as one that was really dead. And we have not well *learned Chriſt*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, if we do not think we have greater reaſon to bewail thoſe, who have ſo far forſaken God, and their Holy Religion, that nothing he can ſay or do, will move them to a ſober ſadneſs: But they go on with a ſtiff

neck and an hard heart to laugh at all goodneſs. They are in ſo deplorable a condition, that we may give them up for dead; and take up a lamentation over them, as loſt men, who will never have any feeling: and therefore are the greateſt objects of all good mens pity. Who have reaſon to mourn for them, and follow them with their Tears; as they would a Friend that is carried to his Grave: Or rather, they are more to be lamented, becauſe they are dead even while they live. According to that of the Son of *Sirach*, xxii. *Eccluſ.* 12. *Seven days do men mourn for the dead: but for a Fool, and for an ungodly Man, all the days of his life.*

And if we take into our conſideration the cauſes of that bold confidence, which hath made them mock at all ſeriouſneſs, even when we have been in the greateſt dangers; we ſhall ſee ſtill the greater reaſon for our Humiliations. They may be reſolved into theſe two: *Firſt*, their obſtinate unbelief; which makes them contemn all that is told them of future danger. And *ſecondly*, their pride

pride and ſcornfulneſs, which makes them deſpiſe even Gods preſent chaſtiſements.

As for the firſt of theſe, it is too notorious, that many men have hardned their hearts againſt the belief of the Judgment to come, in the other World. Which dull Infidelity leads them into all manner of licentious living; and lets their furious deſires looſe, to run without any check or bridle into the fouleſt profaneneſs. And when they are deeply drencht in the pleaſures of Senſe, they ſcarce believe any thing they do not ſee: But give as little credit to other Hiſtories, as they do to the Records in the Book of God. Or at beſt, they piſh at them; and perſwade themſelves that their caſe is ſo much different from thoſe Nations, who have been ruined by ſuch ſins as they commit; that they need not affright themſelves with their ſad examples.

There is a ſtrange relation, commonly obſerved in the *Roman* ſtory, of the *Equus Sejanus*; a famous Horſe which belonged to a Gentleman of *Rome* called *Sejus*. Which was high-

ly admired by every body for his goodly ſhape, fine colour, and delicate pace: But ſo unfortunate, that he never had any Maſter, who was not undone. His firſt owner, *Sejus*, loſt his Head: The next, *Dolabella*, periſhed in a Battel: *Caſſius*, the next, made away himſelf at *Philippi*: And *Anthony*, his laſt Maſter, died after a moſt infamous manner. There was none of theſe, who had ſeen the fall of his Predeceſſor, but mounted his back with a perſwaſion, that he ſhould have better luck, than the perſon that went before him. The beautiful ſhape of the Beaſt more tempted them, than the ill fortune of his Maſters (which in thoſe days was wont to be ſuperſtitiouſly obſerved) could deter them. And thus truly it is now; though there be a great many inſtances of particular perſons, and whole Nations, that have been utterly undone, by ſuch riotous and profane courſes as great numbers violently proſecute; though they read of the fall of ſundry flouriſhing Empires, by reaſon of their luxury and exceſs, injuſtice and impiety, *&c.*

Yet

Yet it moves them not all to forſake their evil ways; in which they hope to be more proſperous. Tell them of the *Babylonians*, of the *Perſians*, of the *Greeks* and *Romans* (not to ſay what the Holy Story relates of the *Jews*, and of many famous Chriſtian Churches) the pleaſures of ſin are more alluring, than all theſe diſmal examples affrighting to their Hearts.

And though they have ſeen ſeveral breaches made upon their worldly happineſs; though ſundry Calamities have invaded the Nation wherein they live, enough to ſtrike terror into conſidering minds; yet *the wicked by reaſon of the pride of his countenance, will not ſeek after God.* Which was the *ſecond* thing I noted; the evils which they ſee and feel do not much move them; becauſe they think it is a ſign of a poor and mean Spirit to be daunted. They look upon it as a ſneaking thing to mourn, and to be afflicted, to humble themſelves (though only with the external ſigns of it) and imagine that nothing becomes men of quality, but to be merry and joyful.

We read in the Hiſtory of the *Eaſt-Indies*, that among other Pagans in thoſe parts, there are ſome called *Rasboutes* *: who have ſuch perverſe opinions concerning Honour, that they think it a baſeneſs in them (who never ſhun any danger) ſo much as to ſtir out of an Houſe, when it is on Fire. Nay, that ſome of them if they come to a Pit or a Precipice, which the Beaſt under them would avoid, are wont to ſpur him on, and leap down into their certain deſtruction: Imagining that by ſuch inconſiderate, and more than brutiſh actions, they acquire the reputation of an Heroical courage. And ſuch ſenſeleſs reſolution many ſeem to be poſſeſſed withal among our ſelves. For none of Gods Judgments which encounter them, can make them turn out of their way, or alter a jot the courſe of their life. But they think it a generous thing not to be ſtartled at them: They eſteem it unmanly to humble themſelves; though it be before the Almighty. They have the courage to march on, not to ſay into

* *Mandelſo's Trav. p.* 73.

into Hell fire, in the bottomleſs Pit (for thoſe they take for Fables, which ſignifie nothing to them) but into that which of all other things one would think they ſhould moſt tenderly avoid; the ruine of their Honour, and their Credit, and their Eſtates, nay, and of their Health, and their dear Life it ſelf.

For theſe men we ought to mourn; becauſe we know not what elſe to do for them. They are too ſtubborn to be counſelled. They are like men in a Frenzy; that are angry with thoſe who would take the Knife from them, wherewith they are going to cut their own Throats. They will not indure a check, or reproof; no, nor ſo much as good advice. And therefore are the more to be bewailed by all good men; who ought to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep on their behalf, ſeeing they have no compaſſion on themſelves.

And if theſe ſenſeleſs ſinners could by any means be ſo far awakened out of their Lethargy, as to think ſeriouſly: though they regarded nothing the example of former times, or any

thing of that nature: Yet theſe *two* things might a little ſtartle them; could they be perſwaded to reflect now and then upon them.

Firſt, that they are Mortal; and it will not be long perhaps before they be ſummoned to their Graves: And then it is not likely they will have the very ſame thoughts about them, which they now have. The ſight of Death will bring down their proud ſtomachs, and humble them a little; when they ſee they are duſt and aſhes. It may make them think alſo, what a comfort it would then be to believe that ſomething in them ſhall ſtill live; if they could but hope withal to have the Eternal God for their Friend: whom though now they forget, yet it is poſſible they may then remember.

Would to God they could be prevailed withal to place themſelves now in the ſame poſture, wherein they ſhall be upon their Death-bed: and ſee what effect it would have upon their Heart. It becomes men that pretend unto Wit, to look before them: and to take care not to be ſurprized with paſſions, they never thought

thought of; and ſuch alſo as will mightily daunt them, unleſs their Spirits be quite benummed.

But if they will not be at this pains, let them at leaſt caſt their Eyes upon thoſe, whom they themſelves have known ſadly to bemoan and bewail their miſerable condition, when they came to die. That's the other thing, which it's poſſible may do them ſome good; for then it is frequent with them, to condemn all their wicked courſes; and to wiſh for a little time to reconcile themſelves to Him, whom they have highly offended. Then they find *Solomon* a wiſer man than they imagined; who thus forewarns one of theſe lewd livers, to take up in time (as we ſpeak) *leſt thou mourn at the laſt, when thy Fleſh and thy Body is conſumed; And ſay, How have I hated inſtruction, and my heart deſpiſed reproof? And have not obeyed the voice of my Teachers, nor inclined mine Ear to them that inſtructed me? I was almoſt in all evil, in the midſt of the Congregation and Aſſembly,* v. *Prov.* 11, 12, &c.

Now how much better, how much more becoming men of parts, is it thus to bewail themſelves in good time; before they have waſted themſelves in wickedneſs? And ſo, to love inſtruction; to thank thoſe that reprove them; to obey their Teachers; to incline their Ears to their godly Admonitions; to endeavour to do as much Good, as they have done Evil: And that *in the midſt* of the People; openly giving glory to God by their publick Repentance, whom they have boldly diſhonoured by their ſcandalous wickedneſs.

This might avail them, and prove acceptable unto his offended Majeſty; but to bewail themſelves thus, only at the laſt gaſp, or when they can no longer act their wickedneſs, no body can tell how it will be taken: But they have juſt reaſon to fear, leſt the ſame meaſure be dealt to them, with which *Solomon* ſaith ſome ſhall be ſerved. Whoſe dreadful doom is Recorded, in the firſt Chapter of his Wiſe Inſtructions, in theſe remarkable words, *Ver.* 24, 25, &c. *Becauſe I have called and ye refuſed, I have ſtretch-*

ſtretched out my hand and no man regarded; But ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof: I alſo will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind; when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you.

Then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me:

For that they hated knowledge, and did not chuſe the fear of the Lord.

They would none of my counſel; they deſpiſed all my reproof.

Therefore ſhall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

From which terrible ſentence, God, of his infinite mercy, deliver us. And let all that read theſe things, endeavour to deliver themſelves, by hearkening to ſuch good counſel, as hath been here given: That is, *by turning to the Lord, with all their Heart, and with Faſting, and with Weeping, and with Mourning.*

PART

PART II.

Concerning

FASTING.

CHAP. X.

What is meant by Faſting.

AMONG thoſe Humiliations, wherewith Penitent Sinners ought to proſtrate themſelves before God to ſue for mercy, the Reader cannot but obſerve that *Faſting* hath been frequently mentioned, as holding a principal place. And therefore I think it uſeful to treat a little of it by it ſelf: The Church having ſet apart certain times for it; wherein if thoſe wicked men I now ſpoke of, will not humble themſelves and Repent of their Evil doings, whereby they

they are pulling down Judgments upon themſelves and upon others; yet all good men ſhould embrace the opportunities of caſting down themſelves frequently before God, to joyn with Gods Miniſters in thoſe ſupplications (like them preſcribed in the Prophet *Joel*, upon their ſolemn Faſt, 2. 17.) *Spare us, good Lord, ſpare thy people whom thou haſt redeemed with thy precious bloud, and be not angry with us for ever:* Beſeeching him to deliver us, as *from all blindneſs of heart*, &c. ſo more eſpecially, *from all Sedition, privy Conſpiracy and Rebellion; from all falſe Doctrine, Hereſie and Schiſm; from hardneſs of Heart, and contempt of his Word and Commandment.* Which ſolemn Prayers were never more neceſſary than in theſe days; and for that reaſon *Faſting* ought not to be neglected, but attend upon them, as an help unto them, and a means to make them more effectual. This ſhall be proved, when I have firſt ſhown, what *Faſting* is.

And in proper ſpeaking, *Faſting* is an abſtinence from all manner of Food;

Food; whether it be Meat, or Drink. As we may be ſatisfied (if it need any proof) from that queſtion which was askt our Saviour, in v. *Luke* 33. *Why do the Diſciples of* John *Faſt often and make Prayers, and likewiſe the Phariſees, but thine Eat and Drink?* Which place is remarkable for two things; for it ſhows both that *Prayers* were a concomitant of Faſting, as I ſaid juſt now; and that *Faſting* is ſo oppoſite to *Eating and Drinking*, that he who Eats and Drinks doth not Faſt. Which is ſtill more confirmed by the words wherein the other Evangeliſts put this Queſtion, which are theſe; *Why do the Diſciples of* John *and of the Phariſees Faſt, but thy Diſciples Faſt not?* ii. *Mark* 18. ix. *Matth.* 14. Here they call that *not Faſting*, which *S. Luke* calls *Eating and Drinking:* It being one and the ſame thing, to *Eat and Drink*, and *not to Faſt*. Nor is any other notion to be found of *Faſting* in the holy Scriptures, or in any ancient Writer, *Jewiſh* or *Chriſtian*, but this: *Forbearance of all manner of Meat and Drink, while the Faſt laſts.*

Some

Some think indeed, that, ſpeaking improperly, there are examples in Scripture of *Faſts*, which conſiſted only in abſtinence from the better ſort of Food, and contenting themſelves with harder fare. Thus *Joſephus* ſaith, that the *Faſt* which *Eſther* and her Maidens obſerved together with the *Jews* in *Shuſhan*, when they *neither did Eat nor Drink three days, night nor day*; was forbearing all delicate Meat and Drink for that time; as *Grotius* obſerves out of him upon iv. *Eſth.* 16. Which may receive ſome confirmation from what *Daniel* ſaith of himſelf, x. 2, 3. *In thoſe days I* Daniel *was mourning three full Weeks, I ate no pleaſant Bread, neither came Fleſh nor Wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint my ſelf, at all, till three whole Weeks were fulfilled.* His *Mourning* (which comprehends *Faſting*) was nothing elſe, it ſhould ſeem, but abſtinence from all things pleaſant and *deſirable* (as the word is in the *Hebrew* Language) while he allowed himſelf a courſer ſort of diet, which nothing but mere neceſſity commended to his appetite.

And

And if we let this paſs for truth, it doth not prejudice what I ſaid of Faſting; that uſually, and ſpeaking exactly, it ſignifies, Eating and Drinking nothing at all: And if the Holy Writers ſpeak otherwiſe, it is upon ſome extraordinary occaſion, when the Humiliation continued ſo long, that it was impoſſible to Faſt ſtrictly, without any refection at all: as it was in theſe Faſts, of *three* days, and *three* weeks. But I am not ſatisfied that *Daniel*'s Mourning was ſuch as hath been now ſuppoſed; for his words may ſignifie no more, but that when he did Eat and Drink, nothing that was pleaſant came into his mouth: And then his meaning is, that for three weeks he kept a Faſt, Eating and Drinking nothing at all till the Evening (as the manner was on Faſting days) and then abſtaining from Fleſh and Wine, and uſing only a courſer ſort of Bread. For thus *Ezra* Faſted, eating *no Bread at all, nor drinking Water: For he Mourned becauſe of the tranſgreſſion of them that had been carried away*, x. 6. juſt as *Daniel* did. The Faſt of *Eſther* indeed

deed doth not ſo eaſily admit this Interpretation; becauſe they did in that neither Eat nor Drink three days, *night or day:* But if we take the words rigidly, they will not admit of *Joſephus*'s Interpretation, no more than of this; for they that fare hardly, do notwithſtanding Eat and Drink. And therefore I am apt to think the true meaning is, that they made no ſet Meal at all, neither night nor day: But if any of them was forced to taſte any thing, for the ſupport of Nature (which might otherwiſe have failed in ſome Conſtitutions) it was privately, and of the meaneſt ſort of Food. Or, according to the uſual manner of Faſts, they ate and drank nothing at all, neither in the day, nor in the night, for three whole days and nights together; ſave only in the Evening: and then alſo they forbare all manner of delicate Food.

The ſumm of what need be ſaid in this matter is, that a *compleat* and *perfect* Faſt conſiſts in total abſtinence from all Meat and Drink until the Evening: and then alſo in Eating and

and Drinking ſparingly, and that of the meaner ſort of Food. An *imperfect* and *partial* Faſt, conſiſts in abſtinence from ſome kind of Food, which we moſt love; or in feeding ſparingly of any kind, and denying our appetite that full ſatisfaction which it deſires, at the uſual times of repaſt.

They that cannot indure the firſt of theſe, may yet eaſily bear the laſt; and therein perform ſomething of this duty of *Faſting*: if their abſtinence either in the quality or quantity of Meat and Drink, do in ſome meaſure afflict them, while in ſome meaſure it alſo refreſhes them. For no abſtinence can partake in the leaſt of the nature of Faſting; if there be not ſomething in it that *afflicts* us: which I ſhall ſhow hereafter, is the very thing deſigned in *Faſting*.

And thus perhaps we are to underſtand our Church, in that part of its *Tables* and *Rules*, which are ſet down before the Common-Prayers, concerning *Days of Faſting, or Abſtinence*. The particle *or* may either ſignifie *abſtinence* to be another name for

for *Faſting*: or it may diſtinguiſh abſtinence from Faſting, as a leſſer thing. If we follow the later ſence, then the intention of the Church is, that upon all thoſe days there named, they that are able ſhould *Faſt*; that is wholly forbear all Food till the Evening: and they who are not able to do this, yet ſhould *abſtain* from all delicate Food, and feed abſtemiouſly; ſo that while they give Nature ſome ſupport, they alſo afflict and humble it. In ſhort, they that cannot wholly abſtain on thoſe days; yet ſhould abſtain from ſet Meals; and take privately ſome ſlender refreſhment.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Obligation we have to Faſt.

THERE being no poſitive Precept left by our Bleſſed Saviour about Faſting, ſome have thence concluded it is a matter of liberty, and not of neceſſity: That is, we may uſe it if we pleaſe, but are not tied to the practice of it. But before they had made this concluſion, they ſhould have conſidered, that there is no ſuch Precept neither, for *Prayer* to God: but only directions how to Pray; as there are alſo how to order our ſelves when we Faſt. And therefore the proper Inference from that Obſervation (of there being no poſitive Precept for Faſting) ſhould have been this; that there was no need of any Precept to enjoyn this duty; it being no leſs known and practiſed by all good men than Prayer to God, and giving of Alms: with which it is joyned

joyned in our Saviours famous Sermon on the Mount, vi. *S. Matth.* 1, 2, 3, &c. 16, 17. In which Sermon our Lord, inſtructing his Diſciples about the principal duties of a Chriſtian life; it is not to be thought that he would have mentioned this, unleſs he intended it ſhould be one part of our Chriſtian duty. Which being not in downright terms commanded, as ſome others are, but only ſuppoſed; it is ſo much the more to be regarded: as a duty unto which there is an antecedent obligation; ſo plain and ſo commonly owned, that he needed to do no more but only teach them, to what they ſhould have reſpect in the performance of it. Adding moreover, that ſo performed as he directed it would be accepted with God, and openly rewarded by him. Which is a further confirmation that it is a Chriſtian duty; becauſe there is the very ſame promiſe made to the regular practice of it, that there is *to giving Alms*, and to *Prayer*.

Which as they are natural duties, which men learnt without any Inſtitution; ſo I take *Faſting* to be alſo:

All

All mankind being inclined to abſtain from Meat and Drink, when they are in great Grief and Sorrow; and when they have any ſerious buſineſs, to which they would apply their minds; ſuch as Meditation, eſpecially, and ſolemn Prayer. And therefore all Nations, from ancient times, have uſed Faſting, as a part of Repentance; and as a means to turn away Gods anger: as we may gather from the *Ninevites*, who proclaimed a Faſt, and put on Sackcloth from the greateſt of them even to the leaſt; hoping God would turn from his fierce anger denounced againſt them, if they turned every man from his evil way; for which, by theſe Humiliations, they profeſſed themſelves heartily ſorry, iii. *Jon.* 5, 6, &c. Which was not a notion peculiar to them, but to all the World, I could without much labour ſhow; if this little Book were not deſigned for other purpoſes. Thoſe words of our Saviour may ſuffice to ſhow us the inclinations of other Countries, as well as of the *Jews*, xi. *Matth.* 22. Where he ſaith if *Tyre* and *Sidon* had enjoyed ſuch means

means of being good, as *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida* had, *they would have Repented long ago in Sackcloth and Aſhes:* that is, humbled themſelves with *Faſting*, after the example of the *Ninevites*; for on ſuch ſolemn occaſions they put on Sackcloth and threw Aſhes on their heads; which uſually accompanied Faſting, as Faſting did Prayer to God for mercy.

And for this cauſe *John* Baptiſts Diſciples we read in the Goſpel *Faſted oft*, he *Baptizing them* (as *S. Paul* ſpeaks, xix. *Acts* 4.) *with the Baptiſm of Repentance:* that he might prepare them to receive our Lord. Who was ſo far from reproving this practice either of *theirs* or of the *Phariſees*, as a ſuperfluous thing; that he ſaith his Diſciples hereafter ſhould do the ſame. For the preſent indeed he did not preſs it upon them; but the only reaſon was, that it was not then in ſeaſon. For Faſting is proper for Mourners; but while he was with them it was a time of joy altogether, the *great Jubilee* (iv. *Luke* 18, 19.) when it was as improper to Faſt, as to forbear to Eat and Drink at a Wedding.

Wedding. This is the ſence of his Anſwer to thoſe that queſtioned, why his Diſciples Faſted not at all, when thoſe of *John* and of the *Phariſees* Faſted often? ix. *Matth.* 14. And he ſeems to me to mean no more, in thoſe words which follow, *Ver.* 16, 17. *No man putteth a piece of new Cloth unto an old Garment*, &c. *neither do men put new Wine into old Bottles*, &c. but this only: That congruity is to be obſerved in all things. For that's the thing he had ſaid before; Mourning (of which Faſting was a part) did not ſuit with the Bride-chamber: And the ſuitableneſs of one thing to another is always to be attended; for if we mind not how they agree and ſort together, we ſhall commit ſuch indecencies, as are expreſſed by thoſe two following compariſons.

S. Chryſoſtom indeed underſtands theſe compariſons (and moſt now follow him herein) as if our Lord had ſaid, that his Diſciples being yet raw and infirm, were not able to bear the ſevere diſcipline of Faſting: but might receive hurt by it, as an old Garment doth by the ſewing a new

piece of Cloth to it, and old Bottles by putting new Wine into them. But, beſides other Objections that may be made to this, which I cannot anſwer; it ſeems unaccountable, why *Chriſt's* Diſciples ſhould not be as ſtrong as *John's*: and very hard, to affirm that *John* impoſed ſuch diſcipline upon his Diſciples, as Chriſt judged would be prejudicial and noxious unto his.

I reſt therefore in the forenamed expoſition, which agrees with the ſcope of our Saviour: who intended not to reject Faſting, or to ſay his Diſciples were not yet fit for it; but that it was not yet fit for them. For *there being to every thing a ſeaſon, and a time to every purpoſe under Heaven; in which time God had made every thing beautiful* (as *Solomon* ſpeaks in iii. *Eccleſ.* 1, 11.) now was the time of gladneſs (while he was preſent in perſon with them, and they were in the midſt of the Marriage-feaſt mentioned, xxii. *Matth.* 2, 3, &c.) in which Faſting was unbeſeeming: But the time of Mourning was coming (when he was taken away from them, and

and they fell into great diſtreſſes) and in thoſe days they would Faſt without any bidding.

And accordingly we find they were in *Faſtings often*, as *S. Paul* ſpeaks of himſelf, 2 *Corinth.* xi. 27. and herein, as well as all things elſe, approved themſelves as Miniſters of God, vi. 4, 5. and taught others alſo the frequent uſe hereof: which was obſerved ſo carefully in all following Ages, that *S. Baſil* boldly pronounces, *Repentance without Faſting to be an idle buſineſs.* *Hom.* 1. *de Jejunio.*

But the practice of the Church ſhall be the ſubject of another Chapter, when I have firſt ſhown in the next, of what uſe Faſting is in Religion. And I ſhall end this Chapter with this plain proof of the truth of what hath been ſaid: which will ſerve for an Introduction to what follows.

If it be a duty to call our ſelves to an account for our Sins, to humble our ſelves before God, to Repent and to beg pardon for them; we may eaſily know what obligation we have to Faſting: And it may ſafely be referred

red to the judgment of any man of common ſenſe, whether it become a Penitent to preſent himſelf before God; *Full*, or *Faſting*: and in which of theſe ways he thinks Sorrow and Grief is to be expreſſed; and the compaſſion of him whom we have Offended, moſt likely to be moved.

CHAP. XII.

The Ends and Uſes of Religious Faſting.

FASTING ſerves as a help to ſo many Chriſtian duties, with which it is frequently joyned, that I cannot mention them all in this little Treatiſe. Wherein I conſider it chiefly as an act of *Humiliation*, and a part of *Repentance*: whereby we both abaſe our ſelves before God, and acknowledge our unworthineſs of the leaſt of his Mercies; and alſo afflict and

and puniſh our ſelves for our former exceſſes and other ſins: which it helps us alſo to cure, and is a remedy againſt.

That it is an act of abaſement, and ſerves to humble and lay us low in our own thoughts, the *Pſalmiſt* in ſo many words tells us, when he ſaith, xxiv. *Pſal.* 13. *My clothing was Sackcloth: I humbled my Soul with Faſting.* Nor had *Sackcloth*, or any other part of the ancient diſcipline, a different meaning: For by putting on ſuch courſe clothing (as Mr. *Mede* obſerves) they ranked themſelves, with men of the meaneſt and loweſt condition. Which was the intention alſo of putting *Aſhes* and ſometimes *Earth* upon their Heads; as if they were below the loweſt of Gods Creatures: And of *ſitting* or *lying* upon the *ground*; with which, by that poſture, they levelled themſelves. And, it may be added, *of pouring out water before the Lord*, which was a very ancient Ceremony upon their Faſting-days, 1 *Sam.* vii. 6. in token of their Humiliation, ſaith *Rabbi Solomon* upon that place: As if they had ſaid,

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Bthold, O Lord, we are before thee as theſe waters that are poured out; that is, nothing worth. The ſame they confeſſed, by abſtaining from all ſort of Food; which was an acknowledgment that they were not worthy to live upon Gods Earth any longer. Thus when *Ahab* (in the 1 *Kings* xxi. 27.) *rent his clothes* (which was another act of Humiliation, making them look like beggars) *and put Sackcloth on his fleſh, and Faſted, and lay in Sackcloth, and went ſoftly* (as a man quite dejected) God himſelf in the 29. *Ver.* calls this, *Ahabs humbling himſelf before him*, and promiſes thereupon to remit ſomething of the ſentence pronounced againſt him; in not executing it ſo ſoon as was intended.

And that it is a natural effect and expreſſion of Sorrow, I need not trouble my ſelf to demonſtrate. *Daniel* calls it by the name of *Mourning*, x. *Dan.* 2, 3. And what he calls *mourning and eating no pleaſant Bread*, in the beginning of the Chapter, the Angel afterward, *Ver.* 12. taking ſpecial notice of it, calls *chaſtening himſelf*

ſelf before his God. And ſo we tranſlate the *Pſalmiſts* words, lxix. *Pſal.* 10. *When I wept, and chaſtened my Soul with Faſting*, &c. For no abſtinence, or ſorrow can deſerve the name of Penitence; but ſuch as is *afflictive*: which is ſo much intended in Faſting, that they are words of the ſame ſignification. According to that known rule among the *Jews*, *Whereſoever the Scripture ſpeaks of afflicting the Soul, it means Faſting.* Thus the great Faſt appointed by God to be yearly obſerved on the Seventh day of the Tenth month, is deſcribed in the xvi. *Lev.* 29, 31. *It ſhall be a Sabbath of reſt unto you, and ye ſhall afflict your Souls by a Statute for ever. And whatſoever Soul it be* (as it follows xxiii. 29.) *that ſhall not be afflicted on that ſame day, he ſhall be cut off from among his people.* And this was the end of all other Faſts, as appears by thoſe words of *Ezra*, (which are the moſt expreſs of any to this purpoſe) viii. 21. *Then I proclaimed a Faſt, at the River Ahava, that we might afflict our ſelves before our God.* For hunger and thirſt is in it ſelf troubleſome & pain-

ful to the Body, as *S. Auſtin* very well obſerves; *Nam fames & ſitis dolores ſunt. Urunt, & ſicut febris necant, niſi alimentorum medicina ſuccurrunt:* And ſhould call to our mind the true cauſe of all pain and anguiſh: that our Conſcience feeling the ſharp ſtings of guilt, and we being pricked in the Heart (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) may more thankfully embrace the remedy, and ſpeedily alſo ſeek for relief, by an unfeigned Repentance.

Lib. x. *Confeſſ. c.* 31.

Faſting hath alſo ſomething of a *penal chaſtiſement* in it: whereby we take revenge upon our ſelves (as I ſhowed in the *fifth* Chapter) and puniſh our ſelves for the intemperance of our former life.

Which by this means we alſo begin to amend: It being an act of *ſelf-denial*; and of no ſmall conſideration: for therein we deprive our ſelves of thoſe ſatisfactions, which we naturally much deſire; and which we might alſo moſt lawfully enjoy. Whereby likewiſe, it is manifeſt, we inure our ſelves to *endure hardſhip*

as

as good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt; and are in a preparation to ſuffer for his Names ſake: which was another notion the Ancients had of it.

It helps alſo to *keep under*, or *beat down our Body, and to bring it into ſubjection*, as *S. Paul* ſpeaks, 1 *Corinth.* ix. 27. Where in theſe terms he relates the diſcipline he exerciſed upon himſelf: which *Peter Martyr* allows to be meant of his Faſting. Whereby the *fleſh being ſubdued to the Spirit* (as it is in the *Collect* for the firſt *Sunday* in Lent, which excellently explains the words of *S. Paul*) we are diſpoſed *ever to obey his godly motions in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.* To which a pampered Body will not let us liſten, for it kicks againſt them and reſiſts them: And therefore its food is to be ſometimes with-drawn (as Provender is from a wanton Beaſt) that being tamed, it may become more pliable to our minds; and they may with leſs oppoſition be brought to ſubmit, Body and Soul, unto the holy inſtructions of the Word of God. Which, by the way, *S. Paul* thought ſo neceſſary a piece of

Chriſtian diſcipline, that he was afraid of being loſt and rejected by God, if it were neglected. For that was the reaſon why he treated his Body ſeverely, *leſt when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſtaway.* And therefore they are ſtrangely confident people, who fancy there is no need of ſuch mortifications; no danger from a Body full fed: for which it is their only care to provide the beſt they can, but never to beat down. They, in effect, make themſelves more ſpiritual than *S. Paul*: for whom if they had a due reverence, they would not *be high-minded but fear*; and after his example, uſe ſuch abſtinence, that their Body grow not unruly, and thereby indanger their Salvation.

Unto which, Faſting, if rightly uſed, contributes ſo much, that it ſerves to ends quite contrary to thoſe of *Humiliation*, *Abaſement* and *Affliction*: For by bringing the Body into ſubjection, it helps *to raiſe* our minds to Heavenly thoughts; for which all men find themſelves moſt fit, not when they are full, but when they are faſting. And

And that it was anciently lookt upon as a help to *Prayer*, this is a convincing argument; that the *Jews* were wont upon their *Sabbaths* to Eat and Drink nothing, till the Divine Service was over in the morning. By which *S. Peter* ſatisfies them, that he and the reſt of the Apoſtles could not be thought Drunk on the day of *Pentecoſt* (as ſome mockers ſaid they were, when they heard them ſpeak various Languages) ſince it was but the *third hour* of the day: that is, nine a clock in the Morning, ii. *Acts* 15. As much as to ſay, Divine Service was not yet begun: and therefore they muſt ſuppoſe them Faſting: unleſs, contrary to their known behaviour, they would judge them to have no ſenſe of Religion. Upon which ſcore Chriſtians have been wont to Faſt, eſpecially before the Holy Communion: partly out of reverence to God, who they thought ought to be ſerved before themſelves; and partly to fit them for Meditation and Prayer: wherein they were more eaſily lifted up above, when their Bodies were empty, and their Minds full.

full. For they thought that Prayers were *fed* (as *Tertullian*'s phraſe is) *and nouriſhed by Faſting: which offers unto* God, as he alſo loves to ſpeak, *the fatteſt Sacrifice.*

And as it is an *help* to Prayer; ſo a *means* alſo to make it effectual: when Faſting is an act of true Humiliation and Repentance. Which is the cauſe that we ſeldom read of Faſting, but as a concomitant of Prayer. Among other places read viii. *Ezra* 21, 23. iii. *Jonah* 5. 8. and v. *Luke* 33. which ſeems to be our Saviours meaning, when he tells his Diſciples, that ſome Devils could not be caſt out, *but by Prayer and Faſting*, xvii. *Matth.* 20, 21. That is, it was a work which required great intention of Mind, in Prayer to God, and a ſtrong Faith in him (in which they were defective:) unto which Faſting helps to raiſe the Mind, by withdrawing it from care of the Body: unto which while we deny all manner of ſupport, we are made more ſenſible of our intire dependance on God alone.

To

To whom it is moſt unſeemly to ſue for mercy, if we our ſelves ſhow no mercy unto others: Unto which Faſting both diſpoſes, and inables us. For it makes us ſenſible of the miſeries of poor hungry wretches; and furniſhes us with as much to give them, as we ſpare from our ſelves. Which was one uſe that good people heretofore made of *Faſting*; as we may gather from thoſe places where *Alms* are joyned together with it and with *Prayer*. The ſtory of *Cornelius* is well known, x. *Acts* 30, 31. where he relates how an Angel appeared to him on a Faſting-day; teſtifying how acceptable the *Prayers* and the *Alms* were, which he then offered unto God. With which agrees the Hiſtory of *Tobias*, who when he ſent away his Son into *Media* with many good inſtructions, inlarges moſt of all upon *Alms-giving*, iv. *Tob.* 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Which the Angel at his return teaches them both, is to be joyned with the two forenamed duties, xii. 7, 8. *Prayer is good with Faſting and Alms, and Righteouſneſs* (that is other works of mercy) *a little with Righteouſneſs*

is

is better than much with Unrighteouſneſs: It is better to give Alms, than to lay up Gold. For Alms doth deliver from Death, and ſhall purge away all Sin, &c.

Nor were the Heathens utterly unacquainted with this practice of forbearing food themſelves, that they might be able to help their Neighbours. For when the City of *Tarentum* was in great diſtreſs, and in danger to periſh, or to be taken by Famine, they of *Rheginum* made a Decree that they would Faſt every Tenth day, and ſend that Victuals to the relief of the *Tarentines*: who being hereby preſerved, gratefully commemorated their deliverance, by inſtituting a Feſtival called *FASTING*.

Ælian Var. Hiſt. L. v. *cap.* 20.

And now who ſees not, in concluſion, that Faſting is every way a means to obtain favour with God, for the averting of his anger, from our ſelves, or from the Nation where we live? For if Humiliation, if Repentance and amendment of Life, if earneſt Prayer, if acts of Mercy to others,

others, be the way to prevail with God for mercy to our ſelves; then Faſting, which contributes to all theſe, muſt needs be of great efficacy for this purpoſe. And this, perhaps, may be the reaſon, why we have not found relief, when we or others were afflicted; nor have prevailed for the turning away thoſe evils which at any time threatned us: becauſe we did not ſeek what we deſired in this way; but contented our ſelves with Prayers and ſome kind of Repentance, without ſuch Humiliations, and chaſtening of our ſelves, as our ſins and our condition required.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Of Faſting-days; particularly Wedneſdays *and* Fridays.

THE Church of *God* therefore hath always ſet ſome time a part for Faſting, as well as *Prayer:* And thought it a duty of ſuch continual uſe, that it is not ſafe it ſhould be long intermitted. For mankind being ſubject frequently to run into ſin, it is but reaſon they ſhould be frequently put in mind of calling themſelves to an account, and returning to him with ſorrowful Humiliations for their faults. And therefore it is a moſt ancient, and no leſs wholſom, Ordinance of the Church, that we ſhould, from week to week, aſſemble our ſelves for this end: To ſearch and try our ways, and with Faſting and Prayer to turn unto the Lord; that thereby we may turn away his wrath from us, which otherways, either

either in general or particular, may fall upon us.

To except againſt this, becauſe there is no Divine commandment upon Record for it, is very unreaſonable. For in the ancient Religion of the *Jews* there was no Precept given by their Law-giver, for more Faſts than one, throughout the whole Year (which was, that I named before on the great day of expiation) and yet notwithſtanding they held themſelves obliged to obſerve many other Faſts, upon ſet days in ſeveral months: ſome of which are remembred in Scripture, and approved by God; though not preſcribed by his particular Commandment. Read vii. *Zach.* 3, 5. viii. 19. where you will find that *four* Faſts, in ſeveral months, having been upon good reaſon ordained, they durſt not alter them (though the reaſon ſeemed to be altered) without a Divine direction: which their Elders, by whoſe authority they were firſt appointed, deſired to receive from the Prophet.

But it is moſt to my purpoſe to obſerve, that there were alſo *weekly* (as well

well as thoſe *monthly*) Faſts among that people: which our Saviour found in uſe when he came; and did not reprove; no more than *Prayer*, and *paying of Tithes*, which the *Phariſee* mentions together therewith, in xviii. *Luke* 11, 12. *The Phariſee ſtood and prayed thus with himſelf, God I thank thee that I am not as other men*, &c. *I Faſt twice in the week, I give Tithes of all that I poſſeß.* Which were all commendable things, if his vanity had not made him glory in them, and deſpiſe other people: And therefore the *Phariſees* frequent Faſting, is mentioned (I obſerved before) in other places of the Goſpel, together with that of *John*'s Diſciples, (who alſo *Faſted oft*) without the leaſt reflection upon them for it, as if they were ſuperſtitious, or did more than needed. No, our bleſſed Saviour rather approves of their ſtrictneſs in this. For he ſaith his Diſciples ſhould not be behind with them in Faſting hereafter; though for the preſent, there was a ſpecial reaſon why they did not practiſe it.

Of

Of which ſpeech of our Saviour I ſhall make conſiderable uſe preſently; when I have noted that the *two* days on which they Faſted every week were the *ſecond* and the *fifth*; that is our *Munday* and *Thurſday*. Which days, no doubt, were choſen, becauſe they had been of old days of Prayer: which the devouter ſort obſerved with Faſting alſo, for ſuch reaſons as I have already named. If we may give credit to *Maimonides*, theſe days were appointed by *Moſes* himſelf, for ſolemn Aſſemblies: which he knew could not with ſafety, be long diſcontinued. And therefore ſaith he, *Our Maſter Moſes appointed Iſrael to read the Law at Morning Prayer upon the Sabbath day, and upon the Second and the Fifth; that they might not reſt three days from hearing the Law.* Upon which days even they that dwelt in the Villages (as Mr. *Thorndike* * further obſerves out of him) were bound to aſſemble in the Synagogues; though on the reſt of the days in the week they did not tye them to it: no more than

* *Relig. Aſſemblies, chap.* viii.

than they did to Faſting on thoſe days; with which the ſtricter and devouter ſort of people obſerved them; as not only the Goſpel, but their own Writers inform us.

Now theſe two days having been thus ſet apart from ancient time for Prayer and Faſting; thoſe pious *Jews* who became Chriſtians, could not think of being leſs Religious and devout under the Goſpel, than they had been under the Law: and therefore ſtill continued to obſerve two ſuch days every week, though not the very ſame. For as inſtead of the *Seventh* (which was the *Jewiſh* Sabbath) they now kept the *Firſt* day of the week as the principal time for their Aſſemblies: ſo inſtead of the *Second* and the *Fifth* they choſe the *Fourth* and the *Sixth* (which are our *Wedneſdays* and *Fridays*) for the two other days on which they weekly held ſolemn Aſſemblies: And for the very ſame reaſon, it is likely, for which *Moſes* or the Elders choſe the other; becauſe they were at the ſame convenient diſtance from the Lords day, as *Munday* and *Thurſday* were from the

Jewiſh

Jewiſh Sabbath; and hereby it was provided, that (as *Maimon.* ſpeaks) no *three days* paſſed without the more ſolemn ſort of Aſſemblies.

Certain it is, that there was no Church in *Epiphanius* his time, which did not look upon theſe two days, as the ſtated days for Faſting and Prayer. Which he avows ſo confidently againſt the *Aerians*, that he fears not to ask this queſtion, Τινὶ δὲ ἂ συμπεφώνηται, &c. * *Who is there that conſents not in this, throughout all the Climates of the world, that the Fourth day, and the day before the Sabbath* (*i. e.* the *Sixth* day) *are Faſts determined*, or appointed, *in the Church?* No body he knew durſt contradict this challenge, and undertake to ſhew the contrary: which is the more remarkable, becauſe he repreſents them as *ſet* days, by a ſetled Decree or Ordinance, and that, of the Apoſtles. For ſo it follows; that it was ordained by an Apoſtolical conſtitution, all ſhould Faſt on thoſe two days.

* *Hæreſ.* lxxv. n. 6.

Which

Which doth not ſeem to me ſo unlikely, as it doth to ſome; when I reflect upon thoſe words of our Lord, in anſwer to thoſe that askt *Why the Diſciples of John and of the Phariſees Faſted oft, but his did not?* Wherein as he no way condemns what either the one or the other did (for that which was a vertue in *John*'s Diſciples, could not be a crime in the *Phariſees*) ſo he doth not go about to excuſe his Diſciples from the like obligation. But plainly ſaith, that though it was not fit for the preſent; yet when he was gone from them, they alſo ſhould Faſt in thoſe days. And I ſee no cauſe why we ſhould not think that he means they ſhould Faſt as *oft* (about which the queſtion was) as the other did. Which being twice every week (of which it is very reaſonable to underſtand the *often* Faſting both of *John*'s Diſciples and of the *Phariſees*) I cannot but conclude the Apoſtles alſo, when our Saviour had left the World, obſerved weekly two ſuch ſolemn days. And ſo by their practice and example, at leaſt, ſet apart and determined the times foremen-

forementioned for Faſting and Prayer: For why ſhould we think of any other two days than thoſe which the Church in future times obſerved every where with ſuch uniformity; that they could find no other Original of it, but the Apoſtolical Ordinance. Thus *Socrates* writes in particular of the Church of *Alexandria*, what *Epiphanius* ſaith of the Church in general; that it was ἔθος ἀρχαῖον, an ancient Cuſtom (or a cuſtom from the beginning of our Religion there) to meet on the *Fourth* and *Sixth* days of the week, for to hear the Scriptures read and expounded by the Doctors; and to do all other things belonging to an Aſſembly, excepting the celebration of the Euchariſt (which it ſeems was omitted there, though not in other places, on thoſe days, as unſuitable to a Faſt) and that *Origen* taught upon thoſe two days, a great part of what he left written, in that Church. *Clemens* of *Alexandria* alſo mentions theſe days long before him: and I do not ſee of what other days *Cæcilius* can be underſtood,

L. v. Hiſt. Eccleſ. c. 22.

derſtood, when he objects (in *Minutius Fœlix*) to the Chriſtians their *ſolennia jejunia*, as dangerous tokens of a conſpiracy among them. For it is plain by thoſe words that they held ſolemn Aſſemblies on certain days, for Faſting, as well as Prayer: and that they returned often, and great numbers met together, or elſe they could not have been held dangerous to the Government.

Theſe were the famous *ſtation days*, ſo much ſpoken of by the ancient Chriſtians: on which they continued longer in the Church than ordinary, the Divine Offices being prolonged beyond the ordinary time; and thence they had the name of *Stations*.

To be ſhort, if this be allowed (which ſeems to be a probable truth) that the Apoſtles afterward, though not while our Saviour lived, Faſted as oft as *John*'s Diſciples and the *Phariſees* had done before; which was no leſs than twice every week: There can be no other days reaſonably thought of for this purpoſe, than thoſe which the Church in following Ages obſerved. And there is the greater

greater reaſon to judge this a probable truth; becauſe the Apoſtles obſerved other pious cuſtoms of the *Jews*: of not Eating, for inſtance, before Morning Prayer was over; as I before obſerved. Which may well incline a conſidering man to think, they likewiſe conformed themſelves to this of Faſting as often in a week, as *John*'s Diſciples and other ſtrict perſons had done: which was no leſs commendable than the uſage of Faſting till the end of Divine Service, on the Sabbath days, in the morning.

And then I can ſee no incongruity in it (but it rather accords with the practice of Religious people heretofore) if we think theſe to have been the times, on which the Apoſtle adviſes Husbands and Wives to forbear one anothers company, that they might *give themſelves to Faſting and Prayer*, 1 *Cor.* vii. 5. Which *Peter Martyr* is of opinion *, the Apoſtle meant concerning publick Faſting, and publick Prayer. And as the Widow *Anna* is ſaid to have ſerved God many years, *with*

* *In Cap.* xx. *Judic p.* 172.

Faſting and Prayers night and day, ii. *Luke* 37. which I think ought to be underſtood of the weekly Faſts, which Religious people then obſerved: So the ſame *Peter Martyr* thinks it reaſonable thus to underſtand the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* v. 5. where he ſpeaks of a Widow indeed, whoſe deſcription is, that *ſhe continueth in ſupplications* (with *Faſtings* ſaith he) *and Prayers night and day:* Upon thoſe days (as I take it) which were then obſerved in the Chriſtian Church, anſwerable to thoſe in the *Jewiſh.*

And why ſhould we not think it was upon one of theſe days, that the Church met together (as we read xiii. *Acts* 2, 3.) *and miniſtred to the Lord, and Faſted and Prayed:* For the very diſtreſſes in which the Church was, required then as frequent Faſting as ever? There is little doubt but the Faſt here ſpoken of, was upon a ſolemn day of Divine Service: which is ſufficiently implied in thoſe words, *as they miniſtred to the Lord*; and in thoſe that follow, *when they had Prayed.* Now on the Sabbath it was utterly unlawful to Faſt; and they

they abhorred from it: as the Chriſtians afterward did, from Faſting on the Lord's day. And therefore I conclude it was upon one of the weekly ſolemn Prayer-days, then in uſe in the Chriſtian Church, as formerly in the *Jewiſh*. For what reaſon is there to queſtion, that when any extraordinary caſe called for a ſpecial Faſt (as now the ſeparating *Barnabas* and *Saul* for a great work did; and as in preſſing dangers the Biſhops of the Church appointed extraordinary Faſts) that Faſt was ſtill held upon thoſe very days: which then they commanded to be obſerved with more than uſual ſtrictneſs?

For thus all Faſts appointed among the *Jews* upon ſpecial occaſions, were in order to fall (as Mr. *Thorndike* obſerves in the Chapter before named) upon the uſual days of Faſting; which were every week obſerved in a lower degree, but upon thoſe extraordinary occaſions were obſerved with greater ſeverity: and therefore it is reaſonable to think the Chriſtian Faſts of the like kind, were kept on the uſual days, (either *Wedneſday* or *Friday*,

or rather both) only with the greater ſolemnity. However, that place and another in the next Chapter, xiv. *Acts* 23. are plain evidences of their Faſting before Ordinations, or ſetting perſons a part for a ſpecial Miniſtry: And upon them is juſtly founded the Faſts of the four Seaſons (called *Ember-weeks*) before Orders are given in our Church; all ſolemn and great things being always undertaken by ſuch preparations. Inſomuch that *S. Hierom* in his *Prologus* to *S. Matthew*'s Goſpel, ſaith that *S. John* being deſired by the Churches to write his Goſpel (againſt *Ebion* and *Cerinthus* who denied Chriſt's Divine Nature) told them he would do it, *ſi Eccleſia tota publicè antea jejunaſſet*, if the whole Church would firſt keep a publick Faſt, before he went about it. Which is affirmed alſo by *Euſebius* in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory.

To conclude this Chapter; all Chriſtians have ſo generally obſerved ſome ſet times of Faſting (which was wholly rejected only by the *Gnoſticks*, who condemned

Epiſt. Hæreſ. XXVI. *n.* 5.

demned all Faſting, nay, curſed it as diſagreeable to their Beaſtly life) that thoſe odd people who (loving to be ſingular and croſs to the cuſtoms of the Church) would not obſerve the two uſual Faſts on *Wedneſdays* and *Fridays*, yet Faſted on other days: as *Marcion* and his Diſciples on *Saturdays*, and the *Aerians* on the *Lord's day*: who alſo Faſted on *Wedneſday*; but of their own accord, not in obedience to the Churches Conſtitutions. So *Epiphanius* informs us, out of whom I have all this *.

* *Hæreſ.* xlii. *n.* 3. *&* *Hæreſ.* lxxv. *n.* 3.

And now that I mention the *Saturday* Faſt, it will be fit to take notice, that the Church of *Rome* now hath, and anciently had, a cuſtom of Faſting on that day. But as *Epiphanius* condemns this as one of *Marcion*'s Errors, that τὸ σάββατον νηστεύει, *he Faſted on the Sabbath*, that is Saturday: So *Petavius* ingenuouſly acknowledges (what his great Learning could not but know) that this was contrary to the Cuſtom of the *Eaſtern* Church; in which that day was a long time honoured as a Feſtival.

And he ſhould have added, that this cuſtom of Faſting on Saturday, was ſo far from being univerſal in the *Weſtern* Church, that it did not, of a long time, prevail in all the Churches of *Italy*. For it is commonly known that in *S. Ambroſe*'s days they did not Faſt at *Milan* upon that day: which the Mother of *S. Auſtin* wondering at when ſhe came thither, had this Anſwer returned to the enquiry her Son made of the reaſon of it, from *S. Ambroſe*: *When I am at* Rome, *I Faſt on Saturdays, becauſe they do ſo there; but when I return to* Milan *I do not Faſt on that day, becauſe they do not ſo here.* An admirable reſolution of doubts of this nature; importing that we ſhould conform to the cuſtoms of the Church where we live, without condemning the cuſtoms of other Churches. For all were founded at firſt, it is likely, upon ſome great reaſon: (peculiar to that Church, wherein it differs from others) and if *S. Auſtin*'s information be right, there was a weighty cauſe for what they did at *Rome*: For he ſaith in his Epiſtle to *Caſſulanus*, the Original of the

the *Saturday Faſt* there was, that when *S. Peter* entered the Liſts with *Simon Magus*, upon a Lord's day at *Rome*, the Church appointed a Faſt the day before, which was obſerved there ever after. But when one *Urbicus* contended vehemently for the *neceſſity* of this Saturdays Faſt, as if there were a Divine Law for it; *S. Auſtin* moſt reſolutely oppoſed him, and denied any ſuch obligation; as may be ſeen in his LXXXVI. Epiſtle.

But my intention is not to engage in any controverſies, but plainly to inſtruct our People in their Chriſtian duty; which is to obſerve the Ordinances of the Church whereof they are members: Which make *Wedneſdays* and *Fridays*, days of ſolemn Supplication, as anciently they were; and all the Fridays in the Year, except *Chriſtmas*-day, to be alſo one of the days of Faſting or Abſtinence.

CHAP. XIV.

Satisfaction to ſome Exceptions.

IT is now a ſhame, or ſhould be ſo, to mention the ſtale Objections of Mr. *Cartwright* and others, againſt this Doctrine, which have been often baffled: That God in the fourth Commandment gave men liberty to work ſix days, which none can reſtrain; and that the Apoſtle condemns the Churches of *Galatia* for *obſerving Days, and Months, and Times, and Years*, iv. *Gal.* 10. But ſince ſome are ſtill ſo weak, as to inſiſt upon ſuch trivial exceptions, I ſhall in a few words tell the Reader what he is to anſwer, when he meets with them.

To the *firſt* it may be replied, That the *Jews* to whom that Precept was given, did not underſtand it to give them ſuch an unbounded liberty, that none could appoint any of the ſix days

days to be imployed otherwiſe, than in labour. For then *Eſther* did very ill, in commanding a three days Faſt; when the exigence of their affairs required it. Nay, they who make this Exception, have no ſuch ſenſe of that Commandment (and therefore they do very ill to mention it) for they themſelves ſet apart any day, as they pleaſe, for Prayer and Humiliation, or Thankſgiving: And when they had power, required others ſo to do. Which is utterly unlawful, if the fourth Commandment, have any ſuch meaning as they imagine: which muſt lead them at laſt to affirm that labour is commanded on all days but one; directly againſt their own frequent practice.

As for the other, there is nothing more certain, and more univerſally acknowledged by all Chriſtians, than that it belongs wholly to the keeping of the *Jewiſh ſolemnities:* to which Chriſtians were ſo far from having any obligation; that they who thought they had, from an opinion that the Moſaical Law was ſtill in force, did, in that, overthrow Chri-

ſtianity, and go back to Judaiſm. This is apparent from the ſcope of the Apoſtles diſcourſe; as well as from the account which the ancient Writers of Chriſtianity * have given us of their ſenſe about it; ſuch *S. Hieram* and *S. Auſtin*. The former of which in his Comments on this place, mentions the Faſts and Aſſemblies on certain days among Chriſtians, as wiſely appointed for thoſe, who ſpend more time in the World, than with God, and either cannot, or will not Aſſemble with the Church every day: That on thoſe ſolemn days, at leaſt, they might ſequeſter themſelves a while from ſecular imployments, and beſtow ſome time on the Service of God.

* *Vid. Socratis Hiſtor. L. v. c. 22.*

Their Exceptions are far more conſiderable, who ſay they cannot Faſt; without great prejudice to their health; or without indiſpoſing them for God's Service. But they may be eaſily and briefly anſwered: For, as to thoſe who ſay their health is hereby prejudiced; if they be certain of it,

it, the Church never intended to oblige them by its Laws about Faſting: which are deſigned, as all its Ordinances are, for the good, not for the hurt of all its Children. But in this let them uſe an upright judgment, and they need trouble themſelves no further: Only let them conſider, it will not prejudice their health to come to the Prayers on *Wedneſdays* and *Fridays* (and therefore I hope they will make a Conſcience of that) and to uſe ſome Abſtinence alſo on thoſe days, will, in all likelihood, contribute much unto their health.

As for the other, they may be ſoon ſatisfied alſo, that if Faſting do not promote the Religious ends for which it was ordained; it muſt be let alone. And one great end, is Prayer, as hath been ſaid: for which if it make men unfit, by raiſing Vapours and Clouds, they muſt take ſome moderate refreſhment. But this ſuppoſes ſtill, that they will frequent the Prayers; of which let them be careful: and beg of God to accept of ſuch Humiliations, as they are able to make before him.

Some

Some pretend that other Reformed Churches have no set days of Fasting (but only Fast as occasion requires) nay, some of their Divines have spoken against such days.

To which it may be replied, That *Luther* the very first Reformer, acknowledges two kinds of Fasts to be laudable (in a Sermon of his on the Sunday next to Christmas-day) one a *Civil* Fast appointed by the Magistrate at certain times; which is a profitable and necessary Ordinance, that all things be not consumed by Luxury and Riot: The other *Spiritual* to be observed by all Christians. And it would be very well, *Si aliquot diebus ante Festum Paschatis, & Pentecostis & Nativitatis Domini communiter servaremus*, &c. If we did all keep some such days before the Feast of *Easter*, and *Whitsuntide*, and the *Nativity* of our Lord: with this caution only, that we do not think we merit any thing of God by our Fastings.

Melancthon's sence is so commonly known, that I shall not set down his words, (which may be found in Mr. *Thorn-*

Mr. *Thorndike* *) for not only *Caſſander*, but *Pererius* alſo (in his Comment. upon xiv. of the *Romans*) acknowledge his opinion to be, That *Faſting and the obſervation of things indifferent, may be profitable, and conduce to Gods worſhip; not immediately indeed, but mediately; for by Faſting a man is made more fit to pour out Prayers, in which conſiſts the Worſhip of God.*

* *Relig. Aſſem. p.* 286.

Peter Martyr alſo reſolves the queſtion, whether men be bound to obey when Princes or the Church appoint Faſts, in theſe peremptory words; * *Aſtringuntur ſanè lege fidei atque obedientia*; *They are bound certainly, both by the law of Faith, and by Obedience. For when Faſts are propounded conſonant to Gods Word, how can he who believes in God decline them? He cannot. Only it is to be underſtood, that they are bound who are able: For if any body be diſabled by his Age, by Sickneſs, or by Labours, in theſe caſes, that which the Holy Scriptures ſay muſt take place,*

* *In Lib. Judic. c.* xx. *p.* 173.

I WILL HAVE MERCY, NOT SACRIFICE. Which is an excellent reſolution, for thoſe ſcruples I mentioned before to govern themſelves by: who being really infirm, are no more under this Law (while they continue ſo) than little Children, Women with Child, and Aged perſons, who need frequent refreſhment.

And thus whole Churches have reſolved; as *Caſſander* acknowledges out of the Confeſſion of *Saxony*, in which they declared their willingneſs *to obſerve the ſet Faſts, and other ſuch like Traditions; provided no opinion of merit were placed in ſuch obſervances*, &c. And the *Bohemian* Confeſſion expreſly conſents, *That ſuch Rites and Ceremonies ought to be retained, which do advantage Faith, the worſhip of God, Peace and Order: whoſoever they had for their Author, whether Synod, Pope, Biſhop, or any other.*

And if any particular Doctor hath decried ſuch things, it hath been in oppoſition to the ſuperſtitious obſervance of them, the opinion of merit, ſatisfaction, and ſuch like conceits, with

with which too many minds were infected: And ſo the Divines of the *Roman* Church have not been ſparing of ſuch kind of Cenſures. *Perezius* in particular, a Learned Jeſuit, in his Comments on the firſt of *Daniel*, takes notice of a ſort of Faſting in theſe days, which many affect upon a perverſe account (as his words are:) They either *thinking the ſumm of Chriſtian perfection to conſiſt in the ſervice of Abſtinence alone; or thereby hunting after the praiſe of men*, &c. *or having ſo little prudence, that they extend their Faſtings beyond meaſure: to the great hindrance, that is, and damage of far better and more profitable things.*

I will end this Part of my Diſcourſe with the Declaration which *Zanchy* makes in his own and his Brethrens Name, to ſatisfie thoſe who objected to them the laying aſide of the Faſt of *Lent*. "They cannot juſtly accuſe "us, ſaith he, that we condemn the "*Quadrageſima*, (*i. e.* the Faſt of "Lent) which is ſo ancient in the "Church, and by the Holy Fathers "received and approved. We do not "condemn that Lent Faſt, which the "ancient

"ancient Fathers obſerved without "Superſtition, but ------- and ſo he goes on to ſhow it is only Novel, Superſtitious, and dangerous conceits (of Satisfaction, and Merit, and the worſhip of God) unto which it was abuſed, that they rejected.

Thus he concludes his Diſcourſe which he intitles, *De peculiari quadrageſimalis temporis ſanctificatione:* Which in the beginning alſo he ſtates after this manner, (that Preachers might rightly inſtruct their People) *Our judgment is, that a difference ought to be made, between the firſt Inſtitution of this Seaſon, and that which followed after.*

Tome iv. *p.* 694. *in quartum præceptum.*

PART

PART III.

OF THE LENT FAST.

CHAP. XV.

Of the Antiquity of the Lent, or Spring Faſt.

IT is the Confeſſion of that Learned Divine now mentioned, That *there is no man, unleſs he be altogether unskilful in Hiſtories, and never ſaw the ancient Fathers, who doth not acknowledge the obſervation of this time of Lent, to be moſt Ancient. For* Teleſphorus, *who was the Seventh Biſhop of the* Roman *Church, and Martyr (about the Year of our Lord* 139.*)* makes

makes mention of it, as observed in the Church before his time.

And indeed it is so ancient, that there is no beginning to be found of it: which hath moved many to run it up to the very Apostolical times; nay, to the Apostles themselves. For which there is more reason, perhaps, than now is commonly acknowledged. For if we consider that the first Converts to Christianity, were from among the pious *Jews*; by whom it was propagated to the rest of the World (which is so clear in the Holy Story, that it cannot be denied) and that those devout people had been accustomed by the discipline of *John Baptist*, who came to prepare men for Christ, to Fast often (that is, twice a week, it is most likely, upon the days of their more solemn Assemblies, according to the ancient practice of the stricter sort of that Nation) we may very well suppose, as hath been already said, that when they became Christians they did not become less devout: but still continued, only upon other days, to keep such solemn times of Prayer with Fasting every Week. And

And why we ſhould exempt the Apoſtles, when they were in any ſetled place, out of the number of thoſe, whoſe practice this was, I cannot imagine; but rather think they were exemplary to others herein: being *in Faſtings often* (as I noted above) and by this *approving themſelves the Miniſters of God*; who did not pamper their Bodies, but bring them under, that their minds might be more fit for Meditation, and Prayer, and the illuminations of the Holy Ghoſt.

Which being as likely as any thing that is not expreſly Recorded; it is no leſs likely that when thoſe uſual days of Faſting, came, in the courſe of the Year, to be the very days on which our Lord was betrayed and ſuffered; the Apoſtles themſelves obſerved them, together with the day on which he lay in his Grave (if not all that week, before the memory of his Reſurrection from the Dead) with a more than ordinary ſolemnity, both for Faſting and Prayer.

And this might be the meaning of thoſe, who at firſt ſaid, That the Lent

Lent Faſt (meaning the ſolemn Faſt before *Eaſter*) was of *Apoſtolical Inſtitution:* becauſe founded upon their practice and example. Among whom I have reaſon to reckon *S. Auſtin*, who expreſly ſaith in his Diſputation, againſt *Urbicus* before mentioned, that though he found Precepts for Faſting, yet on what days men ſhould not Faſt, and on what they ought, he did not find determined by any Precept of Chriſt or his Apoſtles: And therefore where he ſaith this Faſt was ordained by them, he can mean, by their example only. Which *Bellarmin* himſelf ſaw to be ſo apparent, that he acknowledges; when not only he, but *S. Ambroſe* and *S. Hierom* ſay the Lenten Faſt was ordained by our Lord, they mean, not by his Precept but by his Example.

Epiſt. 86. ad Caſſulanum.

L. 2. de bonis oper. c. 14.

Now this example of the Apoſtles was ſo prevalent, that there needed not ſo much as an *Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution* for this Faſt (from whence others derive it) but all for a long time

time eaſily followed ſuch great patterns of devotion. I ſay all, for no Church can be found, wherein a ſolemn Faſt before *Eaſter* was not obſerved; which is a ſtrong argument to prove it derived it ſelf from ſuch a beginning as I have mentioned: for otherwiſe it cannot be conceived how it ſhould prevail univerſally in all Countries, where the Name of Chriſt was preached. As it is plain it did, by the eldeſt Records we have of the Church: which I ſhall not here ſet down at large, becauſe it is beſides my purpoſe, and as many as are ſufficient I ſhall have occaſion to mention in what follows.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Variety in its Obſervation.

THE Reader may take notice that I have hitherto mentioned only a ſolemn Faſt before *Eaſter*, (which *S. Clement* calls ἡ νηστεία τῶ Πάσχα, the *Paſchal Faſt*) not yet determining the length of it; but affirming that it was obſerved more or leſs from the very beginning. I ſay more or leſs; becauſe it cannot be denied, that there was great variety in the length of it. For *Irenæus*, as it is commonly known, writing to *Victor* Biſhop of *Rome* about the difference there was in the time of obſerving *Eaſter*, ſaith there was alſo a difference in the obſervation of the Faſt before it: *Some ſuppoſing they ought to Faſt one day, ſome two, others more*; for *ſome* (he ſaith) extended it to *forty: and reckoned*

Euſeb. L. v. c. 24.

reckoned their day by the hours of day and night; that is, Faſted from Evening to Evening. Which words ſome contend relate only to the Faſt in the week before *Eaſter*; as the firſt part of them do, but the whole cannot; unleſs we underſtand *forty* not of days, but only of hours. Which is againſt the foregoing words, in which he ſpeaks of days; and againſt the ancient reading which *Ruffinus* followed; who Tranſlates the words to the ſame ſence that I have done. And his Tranſlation is from more ancient *Greek* Copies, than any of thoſe, which ſome are pleaſed now to follow: and is confirmed by *Jo. Chriſtophorſon*, and Sir *Henry Savil*, who read and diſtinguiſh the words in the ſame manner.

Which things I have briefly touched to ſhow, that whatſoever variety there was, it is ſtill a confeſſion of a Faſt before *Eaſter*, diſtinct from all other: In that there was no variety; but all obſerved the Faſt, as much as they did *Eaſter*; that is, the memory of our Lord's Reſurrection. And *Irenæus* ſaith that this variety did no begin

begin in his Age, but, as his words are, *long before us, with our Anceſtors:* So it is evident from thence, that the Faſt was not a new thing, but come down to them from times long before them, that is, from the Apoſtles.

This, if fairly conſidered, might help to ſettle all the controverſies which are about this Faſt of Lent. Which many have taken a great deal of pains to prove is not an Apoſtolical Conſtitution, nor ſo ancient as their days: But none of their arguments prove any more than this, that the Faſt of forty days length, doth not derive it ſelf from their Ordinance or Example. For they are of no force at all to prove, that the *Paſchal Faſt*, that is a Solemn time for Faſting and Prayer, and ſuch holy duties before *Eaſter*, of more or fewer days, as the devotion of Chriſtians inclined them, doth not proceed from Apoſtolical Example. And if this were agreed; it would help to give us a right underſtanding in all the reſt.

For when the Faſt came to be generally extended to the length of *forty days*, and ſo received and obſerved in

in the Church (which the forenamed *Zanchy* saith it appeared to him was, *non ita multò post Apostolorum tempora*, not very long after the Apostles times) that may be truly thought to be only by an *Ecclesiastical Constitution*. And so *S. Austin* expresly resolves, that those forty days before *Easter* should be observed, *Ecclesiæ consensio roboravit*, the consent of the Church hath established. Which being thus setled and confirmed so long ago, I cannot understand why any body should now go about to overthrow it: but rather imploy their pains and learning in showing how it was, and how it ought now to be observed.

In which I cannot but commend the Wisdom and Piety of the forenamed *Zanchius*, who looks upon these *forty days* before *Easter*, as, *Tempus ex pia veteris Ecclesiæ Ordinatione continuatum*, &c. *a time continued* (and extended to this length) *by the pious Ordinance of the ancient Church, in which the faithful are, more diligently than at any other time*, *Ib. in quartum præcept. p. 696.*

time, excited to Repentance; both by Faſtings, and by Prayers, and by hearing Gods Word; and by other pious exercises: (I ſuppoſe he means, giving Alms more liberally, admoniſhing one another, and ſuch like) *whereby they are prepared the more worthily to partake of the Holy Communion at* Eaſter. *And if any one,* ſaith he, *thus define the forty days Faſt, who is there that can juſtly diſlike it?*

None but thoſe certainly who love to live licentiouſly, without any bridle; or thoſe whom prejudice makes inconſiderate, and will not let them underſtand the meaning and intention of the Church in this Inſtitution. Which was, not to tye every one to Faſt the whole forty days: but to imploy themſelves all that time, in ſome or other of the forenamed holy Exerciſes, with more than ordinary ſtrictneſs; and as many of thoſe days, as they could bear in Faſting.

For as there was variety before, ſo there was after, the Faſt was determined to forty days: in which ſome Faſted more, ſome fewer days, as may

may be clearly proved. For if *Dionysius* of *Alexandria** say true (about the year 255.) of the *six days* before *Easter* (which were the severest part of the Fast; and *S. Basil* in his time calls the *five days* of Fasting, desiring his Auditors to keep πενθήμερας σπονδὰς, a five days truce with their mouth *) that all did not Fast ἴσως καὶ ὁμοίως, *equally and alike*: But some continued to Fast all the six days, others only fasted *two* days, others *three*, others *four*, and some none at all: Then we may well suppose, the rest of the *forty* days before-going, were not kept by all with the like strictness; but some fasted more days, some fewer, and some were not able to bear any Fast at all.

* *Biblioth. Patrum Tom.* 1. *p.* 308.

* *Orat.* 1. *de jejunio.*

But besides this inference, which may be drawn from his words, we have express testimony, that they were observed variously, as men could bear. For *S. Chrysostom*, I observe, in a Sermon of his, in

Hom. xvi. *ad Pop. Antiochen.*

the *third* week in Lent, ſaith that it was a general cuſtom among his people to ask one another, in Lent time, how many weeks every one had Faſted. And that one might hear them anſwering, that ſome had faſted *two*, others *three*, others all the weeks. Which difference he doth not cenſure, but only tells them, that none of them had faſted to purpoſe; if they had not abſtained from evil ſpeaking and backbiting; and were not cured of their wicked habit of Swearing and ſuch like ſins. And *Petitus* hath evidently proved that in *S. Auſtin*'s time, and *Leo* the Great's, they faſted but three days in a week at *Rome*, during the Lent ſeaſon. And ſo *Socrates* repreſents their practice at *Rome* in his time (which was near that of *Leo*'s) that *they faſted three continued weeks before Eaſter, except upon the Saturdays and Lord's days.* And *S. Ambroſe* ſaith in one of his Sermons, that he heard *complures* very many of the faithful, faſted interchangeably one week in Lent, and dined in another. For which indeed he

Serm. 34.

he reproves them; but it was a thing practiſed, or ſome thing like it, in other places as *Sozomen* tells us: For having ſaid how ſome Countries made Lent to conſiſt of Six weeks of days, others of Seven; he ſaith ſome faſted *three* of theſe Six or Seven weeks alternately, or ſcatteredly, as his word is (ſometimes forbearing all Food, and ſometimes uſing it) and others continuedly faſted the *three* weeks immediately preceding *Eaſter*, without any interruption. *L.* vii. *cap.* 19.

Which variety, I ſuppoſe aroſe, from the various tempers, diſpoſitions, imployments, and perhaps devotion, of divers people; who not condemning nor cenſuring one another, preſerved ſtill an uniformity in this variety: All being more than ordinarily diligent, in ſome or other of the ſolemn Religious Exerciſes of this Seaſon, during the whole time. And thus *Irenæus* ſaith, that in the variety that was in this Faſt long before his time, there was a perfect agreement among Chriſtians: *The difference of the Faſt not diſſolving the*

union of Faith. No, nor the bond of Peace: For he ſaith expreſly they all lived peaceably one with another; as they did alſo in his days. Nay, *S. Auſtin* makes this diverſity in Eccleſiaſtical cuſtoms, to be repreſented, by the *divers colours* wherewith the raiment of the Kings Daughter (*Pſal.* xlv.) was embroidered. This variety, ſaith he, conſiſts well enough with one Faith; which is the inward glory of the Church: For it is only in the Garment, that is in external obſervations; nay, the Garment is thus varied by divers celebrations, ſo that it is not torn by contentions.

Epiſt. 86.

Which ſence of things if we all had ingrafted in our minds, and both ſtudied and heartily loved this bleſſed temper; we might with ſingular profit keep this Faſt of Lent. Which was wiſely prolonged by the Church to *forty days* (and in ſome places to more, as I might plainly ſhow, were it the buſineſs I deſign) not to tie every one preciſely to Faſt ſo many days: but that all might have ſcope, and

androom enough, in ſome part or other of this time, if not in the whole, for ſuch holy Exerciſes as theſe: to call themſelves to the ſtricteſt account; to examine their Conſciences narrowly; to humble and afflict themſelves for all their ſins; and particularly to amerce, as I may call it, and puniſh themſelves by frequent Faſtings, for their frequent abuſes of Gods good Creatures; to form and ſettle holy reſolutions of thorough amendment; to pray to God with greater ardor, both in private and publick, for his pardon and for his holy Spirit; to meditate upon the wonderful love of God in our Saviour Chriſt, who will receive penitent ſinners unto Mercy; and to fit themſelves to receive the Tokens and Pledges of the ſame, with the higher joy and gladneſs; becauſe with the fuller aſſurance of his being reconciled to us (being thus diſpoſed) through the Death and Paſſion of Chriſt *Jeſus*.

And here it may be briefly noted, that the Paſchal Faſt was thus inlarged, rather than any other time choſen for theſe holy Exerciſes; becauſe

then we remember the bitter Agonies and Paſſion of Chriſt for our ſins: which are the moſt powerful motives to make us hate and forſake them; and the cleareſt demonſtration what the deſerts of them were; and how ſtupendious the loving kindneſs of God, which would accept and alſo find a ranſom for us. Which account of it *S. Auſtin* I obſerve gives, in his famous Epiſtle to *Januarius*; In what part of the Year could the obſervation of it be appointed more congruouſly, *niſi confinis atque contigua Dominicæ Paſſioni?* But that which was bordering upon and contiguous unto the Paſſion of our Lord?

Epiſt. 119.

As for the limitation of this ſolemn Seaſon of Humiliation to the number of *forty days:* therein, I ſuppoſe, the Church had a reſpect to *Chriſt*'s Faſting forty days, in the dedication of the New Covenant, as *Moſes* and *Elias* had done in the giving and reſtoring of the Old. Not that they thought themſelves bound preciſely and abſolutely by that example: but looking upon it only as a convenient direction

direction (as a learned Writer of our own * ſpeaks) in determining the length of this Faſt: wherein they might alſo be put in mind, of that ſore trial and temptation, which Chriſt then indured for our ſakes. This being a number likewiſe famous in Scripture upon many other accounts; for the Rain which made the Flood continued forty days; and ſo many days the Spies ſpent in ſearching out the good Land; and *Ezekiel* in the type he was ordered to draw of the Siege of *Jeruſalem*, lay on his right ſide, to *bear the iniquity of the houſe of Judah forty days* (iv. 6.) after which number of days alſo, *Jonah* threatned *Nineveh* ſhould be deſtroyed; and ſo many our Saviour ſtaid with his Diſciples after his Reſurrection, before he aſcended unto Heaven. Which might move the Church to think of this number rather than any other: but without any opinion that it was ſtrictly bound thereunto: for then the Church would have preciſely kept to it; which it hath not done. For deducting the

* *Dr.* Field *of the Church, L.* 3. *c.* 20.

Saturdays and *Sundays*, which were not anciently Fasted in the Eastern Church, nor in some parts of the Western, no not at *Rome* it self; there do not remain forty days. And if only the *Sundays* be deducted, as now in the Western Churches, there will still want of that number of forty days. For those, in the *Caput* as they call it, or beginning of the Fast, which being put to the rest make up that number; it must be confessed were not observed at the first, but added afterward.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Manner of its Observation.

NOW in the manner of Fasting, it must be acknowledged also there was a variety, as well as in the number of days, which they Fasted. For in the Holy week, as it was called, they that were strict would Eat nothing,

nothing, but Bread, and Water, and Salt; which was called *dry diet*, and was proper to those *six days*, as we read in *Epiphanius* *.

In the rest of the Lent, some would Eat only Fish; others allowed themselves also Birds; because of the same Nature they thought with Fish, being made out of the Water, as *Moses* testifies. But others forbore all Fish likewise, as well as Flesh; which was the custom of the *Greeks*: Yet the famous Monks of Mount *Athos* would Eat Oisters; because they had no bloud in them. Some contented themselves with Eggs and Fruit: others forbore both, and lived upon Bread and Herbs and Roots. And *S. Hierom* saith there were some, who would not so much, as Eat a bit of Bread: which *Socrates* also testifies. But in this variety they all agreed in one thing, which was to Eat nothing at all, until the Evening; and then, such Food only as was least delicate: not confining themselves to any particular thing, but as their Bodies would bear.

* *Hæres.* lxxv. *n.* 6. *In two of which days, just before* Easter, *some Eat nothing at all.*

No

No man pretended to Faſt if he Eat a Dinner; though it were of Fiſh only, or any other leſs nouriſhing thing: And though on other Faſts, they broke them at Three a Clock in the Afternoon, they did not take that liberty in the Lent Faſts, but continued them, as I ſaid, till night. At which time alſo they did not indulge themſelves the beſt fare, of any ſort whatſoever: but contented themſelves with the meaneſt, which they uſed alſo with much moderation. *Socrates* indeed ſaith, that ſome faſted only till the Ninth hour (which is our Three of the Clock) but they were very few, if we will believe all other ancient Writers.

In ſhort, they faſted all day, and uſed Abſtinence at night.

Out of all the Records of the Church which ſpeak of this, I ſhall ſelect only a paſſage out of *S. Auſtin*, which moſt lively deſcribes the true ſort of Abſtinence, and reproves the falſe. It is in his Books about the *Manners of the Catholick Church*, compared with thoſe of the *Manichees*. Where

L. 2. *cap.* 13.

Where ſpeaking of the great Abſtinence to which the *Manichees* pretended, he puts this Query to them. "If there be a man to be found, as "there may, who is ſo moderate, "that he doth not Eat twice in one "day; and at Supper, with a little "Bacon, hath only a diſh of Herbs "ointed and ſeaſoned with the ſame "Lard, ſerved up to him, ſufficient "to ſuppreſs his hunger; quenching "his thirſt alſo, for his health ſake, "with two or three draughts of dilu-"ted Wine, and this is his daily di-"et: On the other ſide there is one "who taſtes no Fleſh, nor drinks a "drop of Wine, but hath exquiſite "and far-fetcht foreign Fruits of the "Earth, with Muſhrooms and ſuch "like things ſet before him, in varie-"ty of diſhes, and ſprinkled with "good ſtore of Spice, at Three of "the Clock in the Afternoon; and "Eats alſo a good Supper of the ſame "things at the beginning of Night: "drinking therewith, Mede, and "Cyder, and other good Liquors "(like enough to Wine, and excel-"ling it in ſweetneſs) and that not

"merely

"merely to quench thirſt, but as "much as he liſt, for his pleaſure: "Which of theſe two, as to Eating "and Drinking, do you judge to be "moſt Abſtemious? I do not think "you ſo very blind, but you ſee that "the latter is a Glutton in compariſon "with the former. And what can "be more mad, than to ſay, that he "who fills his Belly even to belching "with all manner of pleaſant things "(ſave only Fleſh-meat and Wine) "hath kept the rule of Sanctity; but "that the other, who Eats only ſo "much of the vileſt food (ſeaſoned "with a little ſmoaky Lard) as will "ſuffice for the refection of his Body, "with three cups of Wine, merely "for the ſupport of health, is pre-"pared for certain puniſhment?

Thus that great man (whoſe words I have endeavoured to contract a little) repreſents, as I take it, the practice of the Catholicks in their Faſtings. By which we may make a juſt judgment of our own in theſe days: and not deceive our ſelves with a dangerous opinion, that we have performed this duty; when we have

have only changed our diet, not forborn our Dinners; or if we have, crambed our ſelves with delightful Suppers. This is not only againſt all ancient practice, and the repeated admonitions of the Holy Fathers: but is ſtill condemned by good men in all Churches. Particularly by *Lindanus* an excellent Writer in the *Roman* Church, in the laſt Age: whoſe words I ſhall not tranſlate at large, but only obſerve in ſhort, that he ſadly bewails the ſtate of the Catholick Church, in which *the ſhadow only of Faſting is left.* *Panopliæ L. 3. C. xi.*

As for thoſe that cannot poſſibly Faſt ſo long, it never was the intention of the Church to oblige them: but they were anciently exhorted, as appears by *S. Chryſoſtom* (whoſe diſcourſe on this Subject I ſhall produce anon) to take ſome refreſhment. But then, it was only to ſupport their Spirits from fainting; and they all humbled themſelves before God, with Supplications and Prayers; eſpecially upon the moſt ſolemn days of Prayer;

and

and bewailed those sinners, which now did open Penance; and beseeched God to give them true Repentance; and endeavoured to perfect their own; and gave Alms to the Poor; and spent more time than ordinary in reading and hearing God's Holy Word: in which, and such like holy Exercises both one and other passed this time of Lent; satisfying themselves with these Spiritual pleasures, while they denied their appetites in bodily delights.

That is, they that could not Fast, took care notwithstanding to perform all those Christian duties, which it is the very design and end of Fasting to help and promote.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

The great Uſefulneſs thereof.

AND now who ſees not the reaſonableneſs of this Obſervance, and the great benefit we may receive thereby? If inſtead of contending about it (for which, thus underſtood, I can ſee no ground) we would all ſet our ſelves to make the beſt uſe we can, of what the Church hath piouſly ordained, and for many Ages profitably practiſed.

I do not know how it appears to others, but it ſeems very ſtrange to me; that what the Church had ſtrengthened and confirmed by an unanimous conſent in *S. Auſtin*'s time, ſhould find any diſſenters from it in theſe days. And yet I fear there are ſome, I wiſh they be not many, who ſcarce obſerve *Good-Friday*, that is, the day of our Saviour's Paſſion, with any

any of that ſtrictneſs, which I have mentioned; but Eat and Drink, and do all other things, as upon the reſt of the days of the year. A thing never heard of in the Church of Chriſt, till theſe later days: which, among other ſcandals, affords matter for the lamentations of the beſt Men and Women among us, during the Lenten ſeaſon; eſpecially upon that Great and Solemn day, when, by common conſent, Chriſtians anciently made a Conſcience of faſting ſtrictly.

And they who now make no reckoning of it, would do well, nay, they are bound in Conſcience, to conſider, if they meet with this little Book, what I have therein repreſented: and I hope they will be convinced, that they ought to do a great deal more, if they be able, than Faſt and Pray, and Humble themſelves before God on that day. For if they be perſwaded that Faſting is a Chriſtian duty; and that there is frequent occaſion for it, both upon their own account, and others; and ſo become ſenſible that the *weekly* Faſts were wiſely ordained: they will eaſily ſee, that

that there is great Uſe alſo of this *yearly* Faſt of Lent; that the defects of their weekly Humiliations and Devotions may hereby be ſupplied.

If there were no other reaſon for it, this might be ſufficient to ſatisfie pious and humble minds; who being ſenſible of the ſlightneſs of their weekly Humiliations and Repentance, cannot but be diſpoſed to hearken to the voice of the Church which calls them to Faſt before Feſtivals; eſpecially to a moſt ſolemn Faſt before the moſt ſolemn yearly Feſtival: that by taking a ſtricter account of themſelves, and perfecting their Humiliations and Repentance, they may have a right (as Mr. *Thorndike* ſpeaks) to the bleſſing, which we then celebrate. For which very reaſon *Peter Martyr* * thinks the annual Faſt was ordained among the *Jews*, by God himſelf; *becauſe many ſins had been committed by the people, in the whole year foregoing; and the Ceremonies of the Law had not been diligently obſerved.*

* *In cap.* xx. *L. Judicum p.* 171.

And

And that ſuggeſts another reaſon why this Faſt of Lent, ſhould be diligently obſerved. For, beſides what relates to our private concerns, there may have been ſome publick offence committed by the community (I mean by the whole body of the People) which may juſtly require the publick Humiliation of the whole Church. We ſee, for inſtance, ſeveral wholſome Laws and Conſtitutions, both in Church and State, generally diſregarded, or at leaſt not obſerved. There are certain vices alſo, in ſome Ages, univerſally prevail, without any check; whereby the people become leſs ſenſible of their guilt. There was a time when the Holy Communion was not adminiſtred for ſeveral years together, in a great many Pariſhes of *England*. It is ſtill, perhaps, not ſo frequently adminiſtred, much leſs attended, as it ought to be. The publick Prayers (which are the chief) are not ſo frequented, as the Service of God requires And if nothing of this, or any thing like it, were known to be publickly done, or omitted, contrary to our Chriſtian duty;

duty; yet it would be very ſafe for us to ſuſpect, there may be much lurking wickedneſs, which is not eſpied: or, at leaſt, that ſeveral ſins of ignorance have been committed; and that by miſtake, and through weakneſs, many Errors may have been, in the publick management of affairs both in Church and State: The beſt of men being apt ſometimes to do amiſs; even when their intentions and deſigns are right and good. Upon which ſcore, if there were no other reaſon for it, the Faſt of Lent is moſt neceſſary: that there may be a publick Humiliation, for publick Errors; if not for publick Sins.

Beſides, every one knows that this anciently was the Seaſon, for putting ſuch perſons to open Penance, as ſtood convicted of notorious ſins: and for ſending up Prayers to God, like publick Embaſſadors (as *Tertullian* * and others ſpeak) to ſue in their behalf for Peace and Reconciliation; and to beſeech God to grant them true Repentance, and perfect Remiſſion and Forgiveneſs. And

* *L. de Pœnit. c.* ix.

And if this Godly diſcipline be not now practiſed; there is the greater reaſon for all good Chriſtians to bewail it: and, looking upon this as one publick neglect, joyn together in publick Repentance. For which there muſt be ſome time appointed; and what time ſo proper as this, which was the time anciently appointed, for this, now neglected, diſcipline? And the time, wherein the whole Chriſtian Church, as one man, humbled themſelves before God, both high and low, rich and poor, to beg of God a general pardon of all offences, with Faſting and Alms, and with reſolution of amendment of life.

Inſomuch, that they who always live in a ſtrict and circumſpect care to pleaſe God in every thing, may find alſo ſomething to do at this Seaſon, as well as other men: if it be but in bewailing higher offenders; and putting up fervent Prayers for them, which avail much from a righteous man. But if they be ſo exact and circumſpect as they ought; they may find likewiſe, that they have not performed

formed the duties of their particular places, and relations, with ſuch diligence: but there are many defects, many overſights and ſlips, for which they have need to ask a pardon.

But if there were nothing of this, that could be ſuppoſed, yet there is a benefit which the moſt perfect Chriſtians may reap from the Obſervance of this Lent Seaſon: and that of an ineſtimable value in their account. Which is, that it will be a time of retirement from the hurry of the World: which is very deſirable to all wiſe and good minds (that they may enjoy God and themſelves without diſturbance) but hard to meet withal, eſpecially in populous Cities; unleſs by common conſent, men forbear their viſits, and keep at home (which is moſt ſuitable to a time of Faſting) and decline their wonted meetings during this Seaſon (unleſs upon their neceſſary buſineſs) that they may have leiſure to be better acquainted with themſelves, and with the affairs, and enjoyments of another World.

Whence

Whence it is that *S. Athanaſius* * calls Faſting, *the life of Angels:* not only becauſe, during the time we can live without Meat and Drink, we imitate their happy life, and are, as he ſpeaks, of their order, and placed in their rank; but becauſe it clarifies the mind, and gives it both ability and leiſure, to withdraw it ſelf from the company of things here below, and raiſe its thoughts to the Celeſtial company above.

* *Lib. de Virgin. p.* 1047, &c.

To which purpoſe, *S. Chryſoſtom*, as his manner is, diſcourſes more copiouſly, in a Sermon he made at the entrance of the Lent Faſt *. Which Seaſon he deſires his Auditors to prepare themſelves "to entertain, with the ſame joy; "that a chaſte and modeſt Virgin is "brought withal to her Bridal Cham-"ber. Let none of you, ſaith he, "be ſad; let no dejection appear in "any countenance, when he is invi-"ted to this Faſt: but let all be ex-"ceeding glad, and glorifie God, "the

* *Hom.* 1. *in Gen.*

"the great Curator of Souls, who "hath provided for them this Reme-"dy. Whoſe Advent ought to be "received with much pleaſure, be-"cauſe the enſuing days of Faſting, "are the true Holy-days, and time "of reſt. Wherein is the ſafety of "Souls; wherein is Peace, wherein "is Concord and happy Agreement; "wherein, all buſie proviſion for this "life being laid aſide, there is no "noiſe, no tumult, no running about "of Cooks, no ſlaying of Oxen and "killing of Sheep: but theſe being "removed out of the way, there is "all Quiet, and Tranquillity, and "Charity, and Joy, and Peace, and "Gentleneſs, and innumerable other "good things in the ſtead thereof. "In ſhort, he repreſents this as an "Heavenly time; wherein the mind "being made lighter, by Faſting or "Abſtinence, may the more freely "take its flight into its Celeſtial "Country.

Which he repeats again in another place, after this manner *. "The Spring "time is pleaſant to

* *De jejun. & de Geneſeos lectione.*

"Mariners, and no leſs welcome to "thoſe that Till the ground: but it "is not ſo delightful to either of "them, as Faſting-days, the Spiri- "tual Spring of Souls, and their ſafe "Port and Tranquillity, are to thoſe "who are deſirous to lead a Chriſtian "life. For therefore the Country- "man rejoyces at the ſight of the "Spring, becauſe then the Earth ap- "pears beauteouſly painted, with va- "riety of Flowers; and the Mariners "are then glad alſo, becauſe the Sea "is more quiet, and they are in leſs "danger to be toſſed by its Waves "and Billows: but therefore Faſting "is a pleaſant Spring-time unto us, "becauſe then, not the tumult of "Winds and Waves, but of Thoughts "and Paſſions, and fleſhly Luſts, are "appeaſed and laid: and the Gar- "land, not of Flowers but, of Spi- "ritual Graces is then gathered.

Thus I have briefly ſhown how uſe- ful, nay, how neceſſary this *Lent* Faſt is, by which all ſorts of men in the Church may reap very great be- nefits. Of which let experience be witneſs, by making a ſerious trial: for

for where there remain no more, than merely the faint remainders of the ancient ſtrictneſs in this diſcipline, they produce ſuch conſiderable effects; that we may eaſily know thereby, what profit might be expected from the compleat and faithful obſervance of it.

Hear what an accompliſhed Gentleman of our own Country, writes upon this ſubject: whoſe words I ſhall the rather ſet down, becauſe they notably illuſtrate the uſefulneſs of this Inſtitution.

Sir *Edw. Sandys Europæ Spec. Sect. 9.*

At one time of the year, ſaith he (ſpeaking of a very looſe Country) *namely in LENT they are much reformed: No ſuch blaſpheming, nor dirty ſpeaking as before; their vanities of all ſorts laid reaſonably aſide; their pleaſures abandoned; their Apparel, their Diet, and all things elſe compoſed to auſterity and ſtate of Penitence: They have daily then their Preaching, with Collections of Alms, whereto all men repair: and, to judge of them by the outward ſhew, they ſeem generally to have very*

great remorſe for their wickedneſs. Inſomuch that I ſeemed here to have beſt learned the right uſe of LENT*; in this Country firſt to have diſcerned the great fruit of it; and the reaſon for which theſe* SAGES *at firſt did inſtitute it.*

Neither can I eaſily accord to the fancies of ſuch, as becauſe we ought at all times to lead a life worthy of our profeſſion, think it therefore Superſtitious to have one time wherein to exact or expect it more than other: but rather do thus conceive, that ſeeing the corruption of times and wickedneß of mens Nature is now ſo exorbitant, that it is an hard matter to hold the ordinary ſort of men within the liſts of Piety, Juſtice and Sobriety; it is fit therefore there ſhould be one time at the leaſt in the year, and that of reaſonable continuance, wherein the Seaſon it ſelf, the uſe of the World, the practice of all men (for even the Jews *and* Turks *have their Lents although different) the Commandment of Superiors, the proviſion of fit means to aſſiſt them therein; and in ſum, the very outward face and expectation as it were*

were of all things, ſhould conſtrain men how wicked and wretchleſs ſoever, for that time, at leaſt, to recal themſelves to ſome more ſevere cogitations and courſes.

For which there is very great reaſon (as he proceeds to ſhow) *leſt Sin having no ſuch bridle to check it at any time, ſhould at length wax head-ſtrong and unconquerable in them: and that, on the other ſide, being thus neceſſarily immured for a while, though but to make a bare ſhew of walking in the paths of Vertue, they might afterwards more ſincerely and willingly perſiſt (as cuſtom makes hard things pleaſant) or at leaſtwiſe return more readily again unto them ſome other time.* Thus that excellent perſon.

Which puts me in mind of a Diſcourſe of *S. Chryſoſtom* upon this Subject: in which, upon the firſt day of *Lent*, he repreſents how this Seaſon prepares the mind to be a fit ſoil to receive the Divine Doctrine, juſt as a Field when the Weeds are killed, is diſpoſed for the Seed. "For Faſting, ſaith he, is

Hom. 2. in Geneſ.

" the tranquillity of the Soul, *&c.*
" there is no tumult to day, no noiſe,
" no chopping of Meat, no running
" about of Cooks: but all theſe be-
" ing gone, this City is become like
" to a grave, ſober and chaſte Ma-
" tron, or Miſtreſs of a Family. Up-
" on which when I caſt mine Eyes,
" and obſerve what a ſudden change
" there is in it, from what it was ye-
" ſterday, I am amazed at the force
" of Faſting. Which having made
" an entrance into every mans Con-
" ſcience, hath transformed the
" thoughts, and purified the mind,
" not only of the Magiſtrates, but of
" private perſons: Not only of the
" free-born Citizens, but of Ser-
" vants; both of Men and of Wo-
" men; of Rich as well as Poor; and
" not only of thoſe who are *Greeks*,
" but even of *Barbarians* alſo. But
" what do I ſpeak of the Magiſtrates
" and private perſons? Even he who
" wears the Diadem, the Crowned
" head, like all the reſt, hath bowed
" his Conſcience to this Obedience.
" And to day there is no difference
" between the Table of the Rich and

" of

"of the Poor: but every where a "ſpare Diet, free from Luxury, and "Vanity. And every one comes to "day with more pleaſure to a ſlender "Table, than yeſterday he came to "one furniſhed with all delicacies; "where the moſt generous Wines al-"ſo were not wanting. You ſee, "my beloved, from the very Proeme, "what the power of Faſting is.

Whereby he hoped they would be cured of all their diſeaſes; and that it would prove as good Phyſick to their Souls, as it is, in many caſes, to the Body. 'For by Faſting, ſaith he, in 'a following Sermon, I mean Abſti-'nence from all Sin; 'which is the end of Abſtinence from Food. *Hom.* viii. *in Gen.*

'Therefore we Faſt 'from Meat and Drink that we may 'bridle and curb the luſts of the 'Fleſh: and make the Horſe more 'eaſily obey his Rider. He that Faſts 'ought above all things to refrain 'from anger; to learn meekneſs and 'gentleneſs; to have a contrite 'heart; to repel all abſurd deſires; 'to have before his Eyes continually

'the Eye of the Eternal Judge, the 'Tribunal which cannot be corrup-'ted; to be as much better than 'others as he is richer; to have the 'command of his Wealth; to be li-'beral in giving Alms; and to admit 'not ſo much as an evil Thought 'againſt his Neighbour. This is the 'true Faſt as *Iſaiah* teaches. And 'therefore let this be our care; 'and let us not fancy, as many do, 'that Faſting conſiſts only in Eating 'nothing till the Evening. This is 'not the buſineſs; but that together 'with Abſtinence from Meat, we 'abſtain from all things that may 'hurt us; and have more leiſure for 'Spiritual imployments. A Faſter 'ought to be humble, mild, lowly, 'a contemner of the glory of this 'Life: For as he hath deſpiſed the 'care of his Appetite; ſo it becomes 'him as little to mind Vain glory, 'and look to him alone that ſearches 'the Heart and the Reins; to make 'Prayers and Confeſſions to God with 'great diligence, and to do himſelf 'good by doing good and giving Alms 'to others, *&c.*

Thus

Thus let us ſpend every week, nay, every day, of this Lent (ſaith he, in another Sermon, going over the ſame things again in little different Language) and then there was reaſon, he thought, to hope that they might get a habit of theſe Vertues before the concluſion. *Hom.* xv. *in Gen.*

And to the ſame purpoſe *S. Athanaſius*, in his Book of *Virginity* before mentioned. 'It is not ſimply Faſting, which we magnifie: for if 'thou Faſteſt, and doſt not keep thy 'mouth that it ſpeak no evil; if thou 'doſt not guard it from venting paſſionate and angry words, from telling 'lies, from perjury, from backbiting 'and ſlandering thy Neighbour; if 'any of theſe go out of thy Faſting 'mouth, thy Faſting will profit thee 'nothing: all thy pains in this, is 'but loſt labour.

And who can think that if ſuch Leſſons as theſe did all the Lent long ſtill ſound in mens Ears, and were continually preſſed on their Hearts, they would be without any effect for

the reforming of their lives? No, the very face of all things then looking ſo ſolemn (as the ingenious Gentleman now named obſerves) would naturally conſtrain them in ſome meaſure to be ſerious: and that, in all probability, would occaſion juſt reflections upon themſelves and their evil courſes; which would produce, in ſome or other, new reſolutions and purpoſes of amendment.

And if a thorough reformation ſhould be wrought in none; yet this reſtraint upon mens evil inclinations, for ſuch a conſiderable time, would put ſuch a ſtop to the progreſs of Vice; that it would make men, if not better, yet leſs wicked, than otherwiſe they would have been. Of which that Gentleman was ſo ſenſible, that he looks upon it as the ſpecial great Mercy and Grace of God, which hath preſerved the ſeverity of *Lent*, in thoſe Countries, where looſeneſs of life it ſo great; that were it not for this, 'the floods of ungod-'lineſs growing ſo ſtrong and outra-'gious, and having no where either 'bounds or banks to reſtrain them,

'might

'might plunge whole Nations into 'ſuch a gulph of wickedneſs, as 'ſhould leave no hope of their reco-'very.

CHAP. XIX.

A further Satisfaction to ſome Objections.

BUT there are ſome who imagine there is no need of a ſet publick Faſt, of ſuch long continuance as the Faſt of Lent is, for theſe good purpoſes: becauſe every man may humble himſelf before God for his offences, and Repent himſelf of them in private, at ſuch times as he thinks beſt, or can beſt ſpare, to be ſet apart for ſuch Holy Uſes.

Unto which exception I think ſufficient Satisfaction hath been given, in what was laſt ſaid, if men would conſiderately weigh it. But becauſe it is

is very uſeful to have a diſtinct knowledge of things, I ſhall give a particular Anſwer to it. And to the firſt part of it, I ſhall return the ſame Anſwer that our excellent *Hooker* hath already made. That no doubt *Penitency* is in this like *Prayer*; that it will be acceptable to God whether performed in publick or in ſecret. Howbeit, as in *Prayer*, if men were left wholly to their own choice of ſuch times as they thought fit, for their voluntary Meditations in their Cloſets, and not drawn by Law and publick Orders unto the open Aſſemblies of the Church at certain times and hours, it may be eaſily conjectured what Chriſtian devotion would that way come unto, in a ſhort time: Even ſo in this of *Penitency* we are taught by ſufficient experience, without any further trial, how little it avails to tell men of waſhing away their ſins by tears of Repentance; and ſo to leave them altogether to themſelves. For alas! they little think of this, but paſs over their numerous ſins, without taking any conſiderable time to bewail them and repent of them:

them: And therefore the Church had reaſon to ſet a time apart for this diſcipline; wherein the publick example of all may be unto every particular perſon, a moſt effectual means, to put them in mind, and even draw them to that, which they all quite and clean forget; as if Penitency were no part of a Chriſtian mans duty.

As for the other part of the Exception, which is the long continuance of this ſet time; I gave the reaſon of it before; that men might ſhake off the habits of Intemperance and Impurity; of Evil-ſpeaking, Lying, and ſuch like Sins. Unto which having been long accuſtomed, they cannot preſently get rid of them: but by making it their buſineſs for ſo many weeks, to refrain them, may poſſibly quite forſake them, and never return unto them.

And if they that are not able to Faſt totally from Meat and Drink, would uſe their utmoſt endeavour to abſtain from thoſe ſins to which they find themſelves moſt inclined, and to deny all manner of bad deſires; they

they might without Faſting attain the end for which Faſting is ordained: Which I repeat again for the further ſatisfaction of thoſe, who are troubled becauſe they are not able to Faſt all day, at ſuch times as the Church appoints.

For whoſe ſake I ſhall enlarge a little more upon this Subject. And as I have ſhown before, that there are many people that cannot bear the diſcipline of Faſting (particularly, they that are of a weak Conſtitution, and can Eat but little at a time; who therefore require frequent reparations of the decays of Nature) ſo now I ſhall add to that number, ſuch as out of choice Eat always ſparingly; no more, as near as they can gueſs, than will juſt ſuffice to ſupport their ſtrength, for the diſcharge of their duties in their ſeveral imployments. Theſe men leading always ſuch an Abſtemious life, that it may be called a *perpetual Abſtinence*, *S. Chryſoſtom* alſo excuſes from the obligation of Faſting. Whoſe diſcourſe I think fit to ſet down, for the full ſatisfaction of ſuch kind of ſcruples.

For

For the underſtanding of which the Reader muſt know, that his Church had been throng'd with company from the beginning of Lent, till about the *ninth* or *tenth* day: when he obſerving there was but a very thin Congregation, he begins his Sermon in this manner. 'What's 'the matter that your 'Aſſembly is ſo ſmall to 'day, and we have not 'ſuch a concourſe, as hath uſually 'been here? Perhaps ſome are aſha- 'med after they have been at a carnal 'Table, to come to this Spiritual; 'and therefore we have not their 'company. But let ſuch hearken to 'what the Wiſe man ſaith, iv. *Ec- 'clus.* 21. *There is a ſhame that bring- 'eth ſin: and there is a ſhame which is 'glory and grace.* No man hath rea- 'ſon to bluſh, if he come from his 'Corporal repaſt, to partake of the 'Spiritual. A ſober hearer, though 'he have Dined, is not unfit for this 'Aſſembly: As on the contrary, a 'liſtleſs and careleſs, though he re- 'main Faſting, gets no good thereby. 'I do not ſpeak this to unlooſe you 'from

Hom. x. *in Geneſin.*

'from the ſtrictneſs of Faſting (God 'forbid) for I much approve and 'praiſe thoſe who are Faſting: but I 'would have you to underſtand, that 'you ſhould come after a ſober man-'ner, and not merely out of Cuſtom, 'unto Spiritual things: and that it 'is not Eating, but negligence, diſ-'orderly paſſions and affections, and 'luſts uncurbed, that make men unfit 'for our Sermons. For, beloved, if 'by reaſon of the weakneſs of thy Bo-'dy, thou canſt not continue all the 'day Faſting, no wiſe man will re-'prove thee for it. For we ſerve a 'gentle and merciful Lord, who ex-'acts nothing of us beyond our 'ſtrength: nor doth he ſimply re-'quire Faſting and Abſtinence of us, 'and that we ſhould remain Faſting 'till this hour: but that, throwing 'away all cares for the things of this 'life, we ſhould beſtow all our leiſure 'in Spiritual imployments. And if 'we order our life with a ſober mind, 'and whatſoever leiſure we have be 'imployed in Spiritual things, and 'we Eat merely for neceſſity, and ſo 'much as needs and no more, beſtow-

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'ing all our life in ſome good work or 'other; there is no need then that 'we are in, of that help which is re-'ceived from Faſting. Which was 'not ordained for ſuch kind of men; 'but becauſe humane nature is negli-'gent, and delights in pleaſure, and 'ſeeks for eaſe and liberty; there-'fore our moſt merciful Lord, like a 'tender hearted Father, deviſed this 'medicine of Faſting: that delica-'cies and making much of our ſelves 'might be cut off; and we might 'tranſlate our thoughts about the 'things of this life, unto Spiritual 'imployments.

'If therefore there be any here pre-'ſent, whom the infirmity of their 'body will not permit to continue 'Faſting, without their Dinner, I 'exhort ſuch both to refreſh their bo-'dily infirmity, and not to deprive 'themſelves of this Spiritual inſtructi-'on: but (having taken their bodily 'repaſt) to be ſo much the more ſtu-'dious of it. Εἰσὶ γὰρ, εἰσὶν ὁδοὶ, &c. 'For there are certainly, there are 'ways, by which far wider doors of 'confidence towards God may be 'opened,

'opened, than by mere Abſtinence 'from Food. He therefore that takes 'ſome Food, being unable to Faſt, 'let him give larger Alms; let him 'ſend up more fervent Prayers; let 'him be more forward, and ſhow 'greater alacrity in hearing God's 'Word. In thoſe things, his bodily 'infirmity can be no hindrance to 'him. Let him be reconciled to 'his Enemies; let him drive all re-'membrance of injuries out of his 'heart: and if he hath done theſe 'things, he hath kept the true Faſt 'which the Lord requires of us. For 'he commands us to abſtain from 'Meat, for theſe things ſake; that 'we ſhould check the wantonneſs of 'the Fleſh; and make it obedient 'and tractable to fulfil his Command-'ments.

'Wherefore knowing theſe things, 'I beſeech you, who can Faſt, that 'you intend and increaſe, as much as 'is poſſible, this your good and lau-'dable forwardneſs: for the more 'the outward man decays, the more 'your inward man is renewed. Faſt-'ing brings under the Body, and 'bridles

'bridles its diſorderly motions: It 'makes the Soul alſo more clear and 'bright; giving it wings alſo, and 'making it light, and ready to ſore 'aloft. As for our Brethren who 'cannot Faſt, do you exhort them, 'that they would not for this cauſe 'refrain from their Spiritual Food: 'Tell them what I now ſay; and let 'them know, that not he who Eats 'and Drinks moderately is unworthy 'of this Auditory: but he that is la-'zy and diſſolute. And tell them al-'ſo what the Apoſtle ſaith in that 'Oracle of his; that both *he that Eat-'eth, Eateth to the Lord; and he that 'Eateth not, to the Lord he Eateth 'not, and giveth God thanks.* In like 'manner, let him that Faſteth, give 'thanks to God, who gives him 'ſtrength able to ſupport the labour 'of Faſting: and he that Faſteth not, 'let him alſo give thanks, that no-'thing of this nature can do him hurt, 'nor hinder him from minding the 'Salvation of his Soul; if he be plea-'ſed to attend it. For it cannot be 'told how many ways our moſt mer-'ciful God hath provided, by which,

'if

'if we will, we may attain the high-
'eſt confidence in him.

'Theſe things I have ſaid for the
'ſake of the abſent, that occaſion of
'ſhame might be taken from them;
'and they might know there is no
'reaſon to be aſhamed on this ſcore.
'For to have Eaten doth not bring
'confuſion upon us, but to have done
'an ill thing. Sin is a great ſhame;
'which if we have admitted, we ought
'not only to bluſh, but to hide our
'ſelves for ſhame, and like condem-
'ned perſons, bewail our ſelves as
'miſerable wretches: and yet not
'then to deſpond, but to make the
'more haſte to Penitence and Pardon.
'For he is ſuch a gracious Lord, that
'he requires no more, when by negli-
'gence we fall into ſin; but that we
'acknowledge our Errors, and pro-
'ceed no further, nor return again to
'the ſame offences.

I omit the reſt, for he repeats the ſame thing often over, in that Sermon. In the concluſion of which, after he had expounded a portion of Holy Scripture, he excuſes himſelf for holding them ſo long: which yet,

he

he tells them, was not without reaſon; but that they who were preſent might be able to teach thoſe who were abſent the forenamed Leſſon; which he deſires them to carry home with them, and inſtruct their abſent Neighbours in it. And the next day but one, he begins his Sermon, with the very ſame Leſſon again: having alſo in his Sermon, upon the day between theſe two, told them; that two days in a week were allowed unto all, wherein to intermit their Faſting. Which he compares to the reſting places, and Inns which are upon the Rode, that weary Travellers may turn in, and refreſh themſelves a while; to enable them to go on their journey the more chearfully: and to the Ports and Havens on the Sea-ſhore, into which the Mariners may run their Veſſel, when they have been toſſed with the Waves, and there wait for the opportunity of a fair Wind to carry them forward. Such Shores and Havens, ſaith he, ſuch Reſts and ſtays hath God granted us, for two days in the week, in this

Hom. xi.

this course of the Lent Fast: that the labour of it being a little remitted, and they that travel in it refreshed, may afterwards go on with the greater alacrity.

Of the same Opinion was his great Friend, *S. Basil* in his Book of *true Virginity* *. Where he saith, 'we may apply to Fasting, those words of the Holy Scripture, *Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left.* For as it is dangerous to 'incline to Gluttony: so by too much 'Abstinence to weaken the Body, and 'make it unserviceable, is altogether 'as absurd and most irrational. For 'Abstinence from the pleasures of the 'Belly is not good in it self; but only 'as it contributes to the attainment 'of Vertue. Now if we regard not 'that, by an immoderate Abstinence, 'for which we chuse to abstain from 'Meat: we pervert the end of its In'stitution; and by our folly, make it 'produce the quite contrary effect, to 'what was designed in it. For the 'Organ being broken and spoil'd, our 'Souls cannot converse with God, 'by

* *Tome* 1. *p.* 717.

'by Reading and by Prayers: nor can 'it comply with our desires, when we 'have a mind to do any good office to 'our Brethren. We ought therefore 'to have a due care of the Body: not 'for the Bodies sake, but for the sake 'of its ministry and service, in the ac- 'quisition of Vertue. For it is impos- 'sible, either to attend to Reading, 'or bend our mind to Prayer, or in- 'deed to be fit for any other profi- 'table imployment, if the Body be 'not well treated, that it may be an 'obedient minister to us. And there- 'fore the Apostle saith he brought 'under his Body; but it was that it 'might be his servant.

I might add the words of another great man, *Greg. Nazianzen:* who showing that we are ill advised, if we think to imitate all Christs actions, instances, among other things, in his Fasting. 'Christ, saith he, 'Fasted before he was 'Tempted; we before *Easter:* The 'Fasts are the same; but there is not 'a small difference in their Times. 'For he Fasted, to arm himself against 'the *Orat.* xl. *p.* 659.

'the assaults of Temptations: we to 'testifie our being dead with Christ, 'and for a κάθαρσις προεόρτιος, prepa-'ratory purgation before the Feast. 'And he Fasted forty days; for he 'was God: but we proportion it to 'our strength. Although there be 'some whose zeal perswades them to 'extend their Fasting above their 'strength. And in ano-

* *Orat.* 36 *pag.* 583.

'ther place * he asks 'this question, Τί δεῖ 'νηστεύειν σωματικῶς, τὸς 'λόγῳ καθαιρομένους; *What need they 'Fast Corporally, whose minds are puri-'fied by the Word?* Alluding, as *Elias Cretensis* thinks, to that passage of our Saviour's, *Now ye are clean, through the Word which I have spoken to you*, xv. *John* 3. For such pure Souls, saith he, do not stand in need of that lustration which is made by Fasting. In the Latin Church *S. Austin* discourses admirably on

* *Cap.* xxxiii.

this Subject, in his Book * of the *Manners of the Catholick Church*. Where he relates what incredible Fasts were kept in some Monasteries, both by Men

Men and by Women: yet ſo that no body was urged to ſuch ſeverities as they could not bear. Nothing was impoſed upon them that refuſed, nor were they therefore condemned by the reſt, becauſe they were unable, they ſaid, to imitate what they did. For they remembred with what pains the Scripture commands Charity to us all: and were not unmindful of the words of *S. Paul* in the xiv. to the *Romans*, which I mentioned before out of *S. Chryſoſtom.* And, in fine, he ſaith, that when they were not well, they Eat thoſe things without ſcruple, from which they abſtained when they were in health. Nay, to ſuch as were weakly, and indeed to all, who could not (for inſtance) have a good health without the uſe of Wine (from which many abſtained) they cauſed it to be given them with great humanity and modeſty. And ſome, who fooliſhly refuſed what was offered, they brotherly admoniſhed, *Ne vana ſuperſtitione debiliores citiùs, quam ſanctiores fiant*, leſt by vain ſuperſtition, they ſooner made themſelves *more unhealthy, than more holy.*

They read also to them the command of the Apostle to *Timothy*, that he should drink a little Wine, *because of his often infirmities.* And in this manner they exercised Piety diligently: but bodily Exercise (as the same Apostle speaks) they knew was pertinent *ad exiguum tempus*, for a little time.

But I need not take any further pains in this matter: for if we had none of these Authorities to rely upon, we might be instructed by common Reason, that we ought to break the Fast before the appointed time of the day, if we find our selves thereby indisposed and unfit, for the necessary duties, which are to be performed on that day. This *Erasmus* tells us was the resolution of a *Franciscan* of his acquaintance (one of the best men that he ever knew) who, when his companion thought they must begin all their Prayers again, because he had seen him Eat before the time, said, No such matter; there is no fault committed, but rather God is a gainer by what I have done: for

L.xv. Epist.14.

for *before our Prayers were languid, flat and dull; but now we can ſing the Hymns with a chearful mind; and with ſuch ſacrifices God is pleaſed.* *Eraſmus* himſelf alſo on a Faſting-day having been hard at ſtudy, which made it neceſſary, he thought, to comfort his ſtomach before Dining-time with a meſs of Broth, adviſed with the ſame *Franciſcan* about it: who anſwered, ſo that the Lay Brother might take notice of it, *Thou haſt not offended: nay, thou hadſt done ill, if thou hadſt not taken that refreſhment, but for little Foods ſake hadſt omitted thy Sacred ſtudies; and thereby done injury alſo to thy ſpare body.*

I end this with the Obſervation of the ſame great Perſon in another place; that there are certain ſorts of Food, which ſo nouriſh the Body, *ut vivat, non ut laſciviat*, as merely to preſerve life, not to make it wanton. And ſuch kind of Food if we chuſe, when neceſſity requires, merely for ſupport, not for pleaſure; it cannot be thought that God or any wiſe and good man will

Lib. xxxi. *Epiſt.* 43.

condemn us for it: when we are thereby only made more ſerviceable both to God and Man.

CHAP. XX.

The Concluſion of the Whole.

AND now, having ſhown what great benefits we may all receive by this pious diſcipline, what remains but that I preſs a little the practice thereof: which thus explained and underſtood, as hath been ſaid, I cannot ſee what any body, who hath a ſenſe of Religion, can object againſt it; nor why it ſhould not be univerſally embraced by ſuch perſons, and gladly revived, after too long a diſuſe of ſo profitable an Inſtitution.

The foundations of which, if they were not laid originally by the Apoſtles themſelves, yet they that began it, had great reaſon to think, it was ſo agreeable to their mind, that they would have thus Enacted, if they had been then alive. For as *Philo* ſome

ſome where ſaith, That the Laws of *Moſes*, were nothing but the Monuments of the Lives of the holy Patriarchs; who following the guidance of ſincere Underſtanding, without the preſcription of Laws, Religiouſly obſerved all thoſe Commandments which were afterwards eſtabliſhed by legal Sanctions: So we may truly ſay, on the other ſide, that the Polity and Converſation of the Primitive Church, was a certain Monument and repreſentation of the Evangelical diſcipline, and an uncorrupted rule of life. For, though there were at the firſt ſome Tares ſcattered by the Enemy, which grew up among the good Corn, yet it cannot be denied that there was never greater Sanctity, nor more perfect Innocence, than was among the generality of the Faithful: who, as far as we can find, always obſerved ſome ſuch ſolemn Faſt, as I have treated of, before the Memory of Chriſt's Reſurrection.

And therefore let not us now in theſe days refuſe, much leſs reject, the ſervice of that; which they found very helpful to them, for the preſer-

ving and perfecting of the Church, in Purity and Holineſs: and which good men, in later times, have been ſo far from thinking ſuperfluous; that they have rather inclined to like the cuſtom of the *Greek* Church, who beſide the great *Lent*, have other three *Lents* (of ſhorter continuance, and leſs ſtrict obſervance) at other ſolemn times of the Year. Let us not lay aſide the uſe of Faſting; the example of which flowed from the Prophets, *John* Baptiſt, our Lord Chriſt, and his Apoſtles: Nor of this great Faſt; which is commended to us by moſt ancient Cuſtom (if not by greater Authority) by the Doctrine of the Fathers of the Church in the beſt Ages, and by the practice of all the Faithful; and which is of very great moment, to diſpoſe the mind for the Reading and Hearing of God's holy Word, for Prayer, for Hymns, and all other Chriſtian duties: whereby we may alſo draw upon our ſelves and our Families; nay, and upon the Church and Kingdom whereof we are members, all manner of Bleſſings; both by appeaſing his Divine diſpleaſure and

and averting publick Judgments, and, on the contrary, procuring great proſperity.

What if one part of Lent be now neglected? that is, the publick diſcipline of the Church againſt notorious Offenders, is not in theſe later Ages exerciſed; ſhall all the reſt therefore be laid aſide with it? A ſerious Believer, who hath any love to himſelf and the publick ſafety, would rather conclude, that there is ſo much the greater reaſon, to be more diligent in that part of it, from the practice of which, nothing but our own Wills can hinder us: ſince notorious Offenders, it ſeems, are grown ſo numerous, that it is impoſſible to bring them to do open Penance for their ſcandalous ſins and wickedneſs.

That is, every man who hath as yet a ſenſe of God and Goodneſs remaining in him, ought to look upon the enſuing Lent, as a time ſet apart, for the calling himſelf to a ſtrict and ſevere account: And accordingly, if any man find that he hath been a Fornicator, though never ſo cloſe and ſecret, a Drunkard, or conſtant

Tipler, an Extortioner, an hard-hearted Worldling, a Calumniator or Backbiter, a Blaſphemer of God, an hinderer or ſlanderer of his Holy Word, or any other great Sinner, he ought to apply himſelf conſcientiouſly to Faſting and Prayer, and giving Alms, and all other duties, which have been ever accounted proper for this Seaſon. And let him not ſpare himſelf, but ſpend this time, as much as he can, in all manner of Humiliations, which have been often mentioned in this Treatiſe: retiring himſelf from company, and from buſineſs, to the utmoſt of his power, that he may lament his ſins, and acknowledge his wretchedneſs, and moſt earneſtly ſue to be reconciled to God, whom he hath offended.

Lamentations indeed, and wailings, and ſuch like things are not the whole buſineſs of Repentance; yet I have demonſtrated they are a part of it. And let me now add, they are ſuch a part (though but ſmall in compariſon) that they alone may obtain great Bleſſings from God upon us. If well diſpoſed people would, in every Pariſh of

of this Nation, leave off their buſineſs upon the firſt day of Lent; that they might go to Church, in a mournful habit; with Faſting, and Tears, and dejection of face, and proſtrations, and all other ſuch acknowledgments of their wretchedneſs, imploring the Divine Mercy, it might prolong our tranquillity: and prevail for an adjournment, at leaſt, of thoſe Judgments, which, if we conſider our ſinful life, we cannot but think we have juſtly deſerved; and had reaſon long ago to expect, ſhould have been inflicted on us. Eſpecially if we continued all the Lent long to frequent the holy Aſſemblies, (as often as neceſſary buſineſs would permit) to beſeech God, in the moſt mournful manner, to take pity upon us: For then this outward part of Penitence, with Sorrow and Grief and affliction of Spirit (though no great Reformation ſhould follow) we might be confident, would obtain from God, thoſe Temporal benefits, which we call the outward parts of his favour. For ſo it did in the caſe of *Ahab*, concerning whom God ſaith to the Prophet, *Seeſt*

thou, how Ahab humbleth himſelf before me? Becauſe he humbleth himſelf before me, I will not bring the evil in his days, &c. The vengeance, though already denounced, was put off till a further day, becauſe he took that revenge upon himſelf which is mentioned in the foregoing Verſe; *He rent his Cloaths, and put Sackcloth upon his Fleſh, and Faſted, and lay in Sackcloth, and went ſoftly*, 1 Kings xxi. 27, 28, 29.

And therefore what may we not expect from this means, when it is but the outward part of Repentance; and the beſt part is not wanting? But we truly humble our ſelves in the ſight of God, ſo as to ſubmit our ſelves unto him; to do whatſoever he would have us: faithfully reſolving to become new men, and endeavouring ſo to be. Or, as our Church excellently exhorts us on the firſt day of Lent, *If we would, remembring the dreadful Judgments hanging over our heads, and alway ready to fall upon us, return unto our Lord God, with all contrition and meekneſs of heart: bewailing and lamenting our ſinful life, acknowledging and confeſſing our offences, and ſeeking*

to

to bring forth worthy fruits of Penance: Then our afflicting our ſelves, our mourning, our weeping, our heavineſs, and all the bodily Exerciſes before named, would profit not a little; but be ſo acceptable unto God, that he would give us the greateſt Bleſſings; even *perfect remiſſion and forgiveneſs*, as we pray in the Collect for this Seaſon. When theſe *bodily Exerciſes* are the effects of true Contrition of Spirit, and when they are earneſts of a new life, and a means we uſe to accuſtom our ſelves to Sobriety, to Self-denial, to Retirement, to ſhake off bad Company, to Devotion, to Self-examination, to Meditation, to Pity and Commiſeration of the wants of others, to Charity and works of Mercy: then will *the Lord have mercy upon us*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *and he will multiply to pardon*, lv. *Iſa.* 7.

But let all thoſe eſpecially, who truly fear God among us, apply themſelves with all ſerioufneſs to this much neglected duty: For others, I doubt, unleſs they be forced to it, will not regard theſe Admonitions. Let it

not

not content them that they do not follow the bad in their ungodly practices: but let them alſo lament the ſcandal which they give; and bewail the deplorable eſtate of ſuch wretched Souls; and deprecate the Divine diſpleaſure; beſeeching him to turn his anger from us, and to ſpare us for the ſake of thoſe pious Souls, that with Faſting, Mourning and Weeping, humbly ſupplicate his Mercy. If the Church did now exerciſe that ancient Diſcipline, ſo much ſpoken of, it would be the duty of the very beſt among us to be preſent at the Cenſures paſſed upon notorious Offenders; and (I ſhowed out of *S. Paul*) to bewail them, and lament over them, in the moſt doleful manner. And why ſhould we not do that voluntarily in our private retirements on Faſting-days, which the Church doth not call for to be done in publick? Nay, we ſhould the rather do it, as I have often ſaid: and bewail this, among other things, that men are impatient of ſuch diſcipline or any thing like it; that they will not ſubmit to the government of their Spiritual Paſtors

ſtors (which is ſo great a ſin, that it is next to Rebellion againſt their Sovereign) and that Offenders are ſo multiplied, as beyond all meaſure to exceed the number of the Good, who are not able to curb and reſtrain them. This is a lamentable ſtate of things; and ought to affect the hearts of thoſe who fear God, with Grief and Sorrow: eſpecially when they conſider the obſtinate hardneſs of mens hearts in theſe evil courſes; their great inſenſibleneſs either of their ſin, or danger; and the cauſe of all this, their groſs Infidelity. Which it ſhould be part of every good mans buſineſs to bewail in ſecret; beſeeching God, all the Lent long, to put a ſtop to the floods of ungodlineſs, that they may not, like a deluge, overwhelm us.

It is not the cuſtom of theſe parts of the World, to mourn in Sackcloth and Aſhes; and therefore I have not preſſed the very ſame ſignifications of Sorrow, Grief, and Humiliation, which were anciently uſed in the Eaſtern Countries: but ſomething like them, and equivalent to them, if we be

be not willing to uſe; it is becauſe we think it a ſlight matter to offend the Divine Majeſty, and are not afraid of his Almighty diſpleaſure. For let us but awaken in our Souls a ſenſe of the hainous nature of thoſe ſins, which we and others have committed againſt God; and of the danger we have incurred by our unduti-fulneſs to him: and we ſhall not think it unreaſonable, to ſubmit to ſome ſuch diſcipline, as this, which is here propoſed, inſtead of that which was practiſed of old in other Nations.

Let every one of us lay aſide, all this Lent, our fine Cloaths, and the uſual attire of our Bodies; for that is ſtill the cuſtom of Mourners in all places: and let us retire our ſelves, as much as is poſſible (for ſo Mourners alſo do) making no viſits, nor willingly receiving any, if nothing but civility oblige us to it.

Let the time be ſpent in this retirement, in Reading, and Prayer; in examining our Conſciences, and bewailing our Offences; in taking a view of the miſerable eſtate of mankind, and imploring the Divine Mercy towards them;

them; in laying to heart the ſufferings of any of our Chriſtian Brethren; and ſuch like Spiritual Exerciſes; which we are too apt to neglect, in a croud of buſineſs, and of company.

Let the conſideration of it, move us to afflict our ſelves with Faſting; or, if that cannot be, with a ſpare Diet.

Let the rich eſpecially and thoſe that live deliciouſly, deny their appetites; keep a ſlender Table; and puniſh their exceſſes with harder fare.

Drink no Wine, nor ſtrong Liquors, without neceſſity; make no Feaſts, nor accept of invitations to them.

Give Alms liberally; and frequent the publick Prayers: and there let us humble our ſelves before God, and bluſh to lift up our Eyes unto Heaven.

Yea, let us Pray, with all Prayer and Supplication, in the Spirit (*as the Apoſtle enjoyns,* vi. *Epheſ.* 18.) *that is, addreſs our ſelves to him in all ſorts of holy thoughts and devout affections; and that with great fervour and ardent deſires; with Tears and knocking our Breaſts, and bended knees* (as *Theophylact* expounds the words) *beſeeching*

seeching him, by the Mystery of his holy Incarnation; by his holy Nativity, and Circumcision; by his Baptism, Fasting and Temptation; by his Agony and Bloudy Sweat, by his Cross and Passion, &c. graciously to deliver us.

Tremble to think that you have so oft prayed in the Litany, that God would PITIFULLY BEHOLD THE SORROWS OF YOUR HEARTS, *when, perhaps, you had no* SORROW *at all there: and now, if you have any, let it be testified in all the sorrowful actions, that I have named.*

And forbear Musick, and Dancing, and all such like pleasures.

Let those that have been slothful, content themselves with less sleep; that they may have more time for Prayer and Heavenly thoughts.

They that have been too Voluptuous, will do well also to lye hard; though not upon the ground.

Finally, let there be a general Abstinence from all manner of Recreations; unless the preservation of Health make them necessary, and then use them privately.

Leave

Leave the Play-houſes quite empty; and make the Churches full: Go to no publick ſhows, nor meetings; but ſpend the time, when you come from Church, in ſetting all things right at home.

For *S. Chryſoſtom*, I remember, having heard that ſome of his Auditors, ſince his laſt Sermon, had been at an *Horſe-race*; bewails it, in his next, as the loſs of all the pains he had beſtowed upon them, from the beginning of Lent. And, among other things, tells them, it gave great ſcandal to *Jews* and to *Gentiles*: who, ſeeing thoſe that were at Church daily, mingle themſelves at thoſe meetings, with ſuch as came not thither, think, ſaith he, that all we do is a deluſion; and that we are all alike, no better than themſelves. A great deal more he ſaith on this ſubject, in his Sixth and Seventh Sermon upon *Geneſis*; and begins his Forty firſt Sermon with the very ſame matter. In like manner *S. Baſil* * chides thoſe, who as ſoon as Sermon was done, went and plaid at Dice and Tables:

* *Hom.* viii. *in Hexaem. p.* 110.

It

It being to no purpoſe to afflict the Body with Faſting, if the Mind continue vain, and full of vicious Affections. And therefore *S. Chryſoſtom* frequently beſeeches his hearers, that when they came home, they would ſpend their time in ruminating upon what they had been taught, and conferring one with another about it: and thereby free themſelves from all bad deſires, and flee the ſnares of the Devil. For when the Devil, ſaith he, ſees our Minds ſolicitous about theſe Divine matters, and perpetually converſant in them, he dares not approach us; but flees away before the face of a more powerful Spirit working in us.

Now all this that hath been ſaid, doth not come up to the Primitive ſtrictneſs; but it approaches ſomething near unto it: and is a great mortification of ſenſual Nature; which delights in company and merry meetings, in Feaſts and Jollity, in Sport and Plays, in Laughter and all manner of Mirth and Pleaſure. Which we ought to lay aſide and deny our ſelves at this Seaſon; that we may

may fulfil the Apoſtolical Precept, iv. *Jam.* 9. 10. *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to heavineſs.*

Humble your ſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up.

Let the Reader caſt his Eyes back to the latter end of the *Seventh* Chapter of this Book: and when he hath peruſed it again, conſider with himſelf what he hath to do. Eſpecially in the *Great Week* of *Lent* (as they anciently called the Week juſt before *Eaſter*) which had that Name given it, ſaith the great Man before mentioned, "because in it certain "great, and unſpeakable benefits were beſtowed upon "us. There was an end put in this "Week, to the long continued War; "Death was extinguiſhed; the Curſe "was taken away; the tyranny of "the Devil diſſolved, and he himſelf diſarmed; God reconciled to "mankind; Heaven made enterable; "Men aſſociated with Angels; things "diſtant conjoyned; the Partition-wall

S. Chryſoſt. Hom. xxx. *in Geneſ.*

"wall taken down; the incloſure "laid open; the God of Peace pa- "cified all things, both in Heaven "and in Earth. And therefore we "call it the *Great Week*; becauſe the "Lord graciouſly conferred on us "ſuch a multitude of Gifts therein. "For which reaſon many both in- "large their *Faſting*, and are remark- "able for *Watchings*, and *holy Per-* "*noctations*, and *Alms*: *Showing by* "*their deeds the honour they have for* "*this Week*. For if our Lord freely "beſtowed ſuch great benefits upon "us therein; how can we think it "decent in us, not then to make a "ſhow of all poſſible reverence and "honour? For even Kings them- "ſelves declare, in what admiration "they have thoſe venerable Days; "by commanding a vacation to all "thoſe who manage Civil affairs; by "ſhutting up the doors of the Courts "of Judgment; and requiring a "ceſſation of all ſtrife and conten- "tion: that men may have nothing "to do, but to apply themſelves to "the right performance of Spiritual "offices; with the greateſt quietneſs,

"and

"and tranquillity. And more than "this, they honour theſe Days with "another liberality: looſing the "bonds of Priſoners, and letting "them go free; that, as far as Hu-"mane power reaches, they may "imitate their Lord. For as he "ſet us at liberty, when we were faſt "tied and bound with the Chains of "our Sins, and gave us the injoy-"ment alſo of innumerable good "things: ſo we in like manner, ought, "the beſt we can, to be imitators "of this loving kindneſs of the "Lord.

"You ſee, how every one of us "ſhould ſhow in all things, the re-"verence and the honour, which is "becoming thoſe Days, which were "the procurers of ſo many and ſuch "good things. And therefore now, "if ever, let me intreat you to ex-"pel all Worldly thoughts; and to "keep the Eye of your Mind clear, "and vigilant. Now is the time, to "Faſt more ſtrictly; to make more "earneſt Prayers; to be more exact "and large in confeſſion of Sins; to

"be

"be diligent in all the actions of Pie-
"ty; to give Alms more liberally;
"to exercise the strictest Patience,
"Forbearance, Meekness, and all
"other Vertue: That coming with
"these accomplishments unto *Easter*-
"day, we may partake of the bounty
"of the Lord.

THE END.